

# COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

# CJR

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# It's the Content, Stupid

*The dean of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism serves also as the publisher of the Columbia Journalism Review. The school considers the magazine its most important instrument of continuing education for practicing journalists and for the public about journalism. Many other activities of the school also serve that function, and starting with this issue, this publisher's page will report on those that seem of particular interest to readers of CJR.*

In May, the School's First Amendment Leaders' Breakfast (one of a series of forums for journalism and communications industry leaders) addressed a question that looms over all of us in the field — "The Future of Newspapers and the Newspaper of the Future." Our speakers were two key figures in the media world: Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr., publisher of *The New York Times*, and Jerome Rubin, chairman of the News in the Future Program at MIT's Media Lab. Floyd Abrams, recently appointed William J. Brennan Jr. Visiting Professor of First Amendment Issues, was the moderator.

The discussion was lively and Mr. Sulzberger's observations about the future of print journalism seemed particularly pertinent. Following is an excerpt of his remarks:

When one buys a *New York Times*, one buys a guide. One buys judgment. One buys talent. One buys credibility. And today, as in years past, one gets a little something special left over with which to wrap the fish. If, in the years ahead, we must give up that something special with which to wrap the fish, well, that's a cost I'm willing to bear. The plain truth is I don't give a tinker's damn how we distribute our information. As long as our customers want it on newsprint, I'll do all I can to give it to them on newsprint. If they want it on CD-ROM, I'll try to meet that need. The Internet? That's fine. Hell, if someone would be kind enough to invent a technology, I'll be pleased to beam it directly into your cortex. We'll have the city edition, the late city edition, and the mind-meld edition.

My point is a simple one. I am absolutely agnostic regarding methods of distribution. Indeed, one doesn't have to be a rocket scientist or even, for that matter, a high school graduate, to recognize that ink on wood via trucks is a time-consuming and expensive operation. Replacing that with an electronic distribution system would not only insure that our news was an up-to-the-minute snapshot of the world's events, but it would also take hundreds of millions of dollars out of our cost structure. That's why we are looking at all the various methods out there.

Even if the price of that new delivery system is the loss of

certain kinds of advertising — and I don't for a minute believe that it has to be — then from a practical financial point of view, newspapers can still win. They can still win, that is, if they remember that, "It's the content, stupid." I've had those words carved above my desk. "It's the content, stupid."

Let me quote two of my favorite information age prophets, that's prophets with a ph, not with an f. First, Bill Gates: "If your business has anything to do with information, you're in deep trouble." Second, Tom Peters: "A compelling product comes first." Who's right? Well, for my money, both are. As the barrier to entry to this information business drops, more players will enter the field. Some will be good, and some will be awful. And it will be increasingly hard for the reader to know which is which.

Unless something truly magical happens, such as God creating the thirty-six hour day, the future victims of an information data dump will be greedy as never before for a trustworthy guide through this maze. In other words, our role as newspapers, regardless of the method of distribution, will become *more* valuable, not less, in the days ahead. As long as we remember it's the content.

The idea that Americans or, for that matter, people anywhere, have the time, energy, or desire to daily sift, unaided, through billions of gigabytes of raw data is, on the face of it, absurd. If there are designers out there building that system, that's not my problem. This is one case where I don't believe in the applicability of that all-but-biblical adage, If you build it, they will come.

Will technologies converge? Of course. Will people want sound and motion with their news reports? Probably, and we'll give it to them. That's not hard. Will they want specific stories with particular interest automatically flagged for them, with the ability to call up deeper levels of detail? Absolutely. And we'll give it to them. Will they want it on portable flat-screen terminals that offer the same sort of random access to the news report that they enjoy today on newsprint? Certainly. And we'll give it to them. None of that strikes me as particularly difficult to achieve, assuming some still surprisingly thorny technical problems involving data compression and storage, servers, conduits, et cetera, are resolved.

I can't stand here and pretend I know what the business model for the electronic future looks like yet. Clearly, the economic formula that now supports newspapers, with its heavy emphasis on advertising, may change. And we must be prepared for that. Right now, I see lots of ways of losing a great deal of money very quickly. And perhaps the glimmers of a few that will result in relatively small profits. But I know that will change, and we'll be there when it does. ♦

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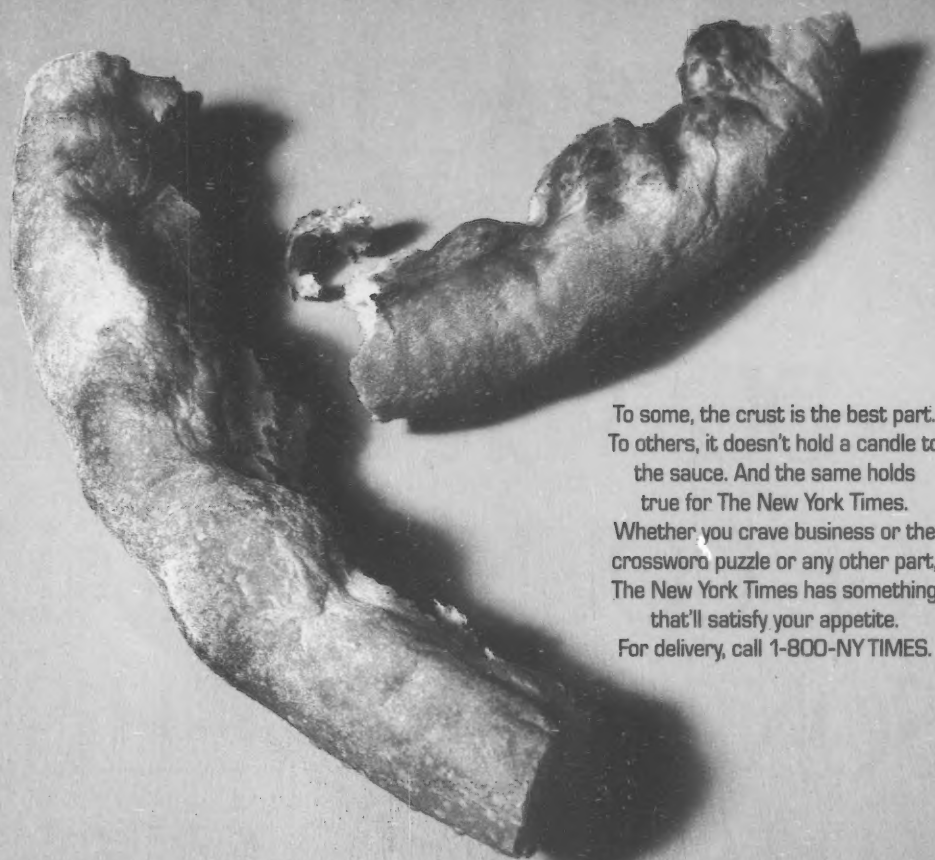
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# LETTERS

## SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

Kudos to CJR and John Wicklein for "No Experience Required" (September/October).

As a working journalist with a twenty-year track record, I have often been asked to give seminars and speeches at university journalism departments. And my experience has terrified me: professors with no practical experience whatsoever attempting to turn out reporters and editors has been the norm, not the exception. In one particular case of a major northeastern university, I was asked to speak to students in "Media Ecology." When I inquired what that was, exactly, I was sent a four-page, single-spaced prospectus not written in English as we know it.

I became a journalist because I was taught by journalism professors at the University of Arizona, who were required then — as now — to have a current working knowledge of the profession. The fact that this and other solid journalism programs are in jeopardy because academics apply the same publish-or-perish standards to journalists as they do to lit grads running Byron through the mill one more time is unthinkable.

Keep up the fight. The future of our profession — from village weeklies to The Great Grey Lady — depends on it.

MARY ALICE KELLOGG  
New York, N.Y.

I found John Wicklein's "No Experience Required" nothing more than the same old rehash of bad blood between practicing journalists and journalism educators. Wicklein's thinly disguised disgust with "theory courses" is especially bothersome since a "theory course" means to many practicing journalists any course other than a reporting/writing course. One of the features of theory courses is that some of them teach students how to analyze arguments such as either/or false dichotomies that compel students, faculty, and departments to "choose" between theory and practice. Wicklein makes a similar argument when he suggests that a faculty member is capable of being either a good researcher or a good teacher. I would suggest that most departments (other than those doctoral-grant-

ing departments Wicklein chose to discuss) have a "balanced" faculty of experienced practitioners and academic journalism educators, both of which are quite capable of excellent teaching and research. Such a faculty appears to be beneficial for the universities and the students.

MARK HICKSON, III  
Professor and Chair  
Communications Studies Department  
The University of Alabama  
Birmingham, Ala.

In my current position, I've seen many journalism grads come in at entry level and wash out. In fact, the first thing I was told as an intern at the Jacksonville, Florida, *Journal* was "forget all that crap from J-school. We'll teach you how to do it." And they did.

Which is a long way of saying, Are journalism degrees of any value? From H.L. Mencken to Edna Buchanan, many have entered the newsroom from high school and worked their way up. In this fashion, the meek fall away and the resourceful, creative, and clever survive.

Perhaps we should drop this posture that journalism is a gentleman's profession — it isn't. Journalism requires people who can think for themselves and convey ideas clearly via the written word. Most of all it takes an instinct that I have come to believe one either has or lacks. The "nose for news" can be developed and polished by editors, but it can't be fabricated.

I say hire prospects out of high school and train them as you will. Six months under the beady glare of a copy desk chief will do a kid more good than ten years of J-school. After six more months' instruction from a gifted editor or senior reporter, the heat and pressure will have yielded either a diamond or a little mound of dust.

The dust mounds can then shuffle off to university to acquire degrees and be certified as ladies and gentlemen. Everyone would win — but most particularly newspapers and their readers.

SUSAN VAN SLYKE  
The Orange Leader  
Orange, Tex.

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John Wicklein's article on journalism schools paints a very misleading picture of the School of Journalism at The Ohio State University.

There is no basis for Wicklein's assertion that Jim Neff, the new director of the Kiplinger Public Affairs Reporting Program, "will apparently be the sole professional appointment for the foreseeable future." We'll seek faculty members with solid journalistic experience and scholarly credentials, as in the past.

The School of Journalism and the Department of Communication probably will merge into a new unit called the School of Journalism and Communication, and the new school will continue the present tradition of providing students a solid professional journalism education.

I find it ironic that, when Wicklein wants to make a point about the importance of journalism education for newspapers, he cites a study of mine — though without the courtesy of attribution — indicating that 75 percent of the entry-level hires at daily newspapers come from university journalism programs. The type of data on labor supply and demand and human resource management that journalism desperately needs is being produced by the scholars Wicklein attacks so strongly in his article.

LEE B. BECKER, PH.D.  
Professor and Interim Director  
School of Journalism  
The Ohio State University  
Columbus, Ohio

As a retired newspaper editor with modest teaching experience, I find puzzling the lament — reflected in Wicklein's essay — that colleges and universities are emphasizing mass communications theory at the expense of the journalistic craft.

Lee Becker's studies at Ohio State show that salaries for entry-level newspaper staffers, already low, have declined 8 percent in inflation-adjusted numbers since 1990. Meanwhile, the number of daily newspapers in the United States has been shrinking steadily. And, as CJR regularly illustrates, definitions of news have become moving targets.

Given all that, university administrators ought to be saluted, not jeered, for attempting to broaden their students' perspectives on the very cloudy world of the mass media.

JOHN H. McMILLAN  
Salem, Ore.

Dr. Everette Dennis is quite correct when he cites the University of Illinois as housing one of the premier institutes for communications research that hire only Ph.D.'s. Readers unfamiliar with academe might not realize that UI also has a separate department of journalism with fourteen full-time faculty members with a total of 170 years of professional experience — whose forte is

teaching solid public affairs journalism, as evidenced by the achievements of our graduates, including James Reston, Hal Bruno, and Godfrey Sperling.

I would not want to see our journalism graduates disdained, as Ben Bagdikian urged, because we were mistaken for the Ph.D.-granting communications research unit, which would readily admit that its mission is not educating students to be public-affairs journalists.

STEVEN HELLE  
Head  
Department of Journalism  
Urbana, Ill.

If there's a point to be made about Ph.D.'s vs. professionals in the battle for journalism education, it isn't served by cheap shots. As an example of "irrelevant" scholarly research, John Wicklein, citing unnamed journalism educators, mentions a *Journalism Quarterly* article titled "The Effectiveness of Random, Consecutive Day and Constructed Week Sampling in Newspaper Content Analysis." This methodological article had a very practical focus — how to do newspaper content analysis efficiently, i.e., without wasting money. Portraying it as irrelevant based on its title is pretty weak journalism.

Content analysis and other tools of the academy can be used for professional as well as scholarly purposes. Last year, the *Portland Oregonian* asked me to do a content analysis of its health and science coverage. The paper was planning to adopt a team-reporting structure and wanted a baseline for later comparisons. And many so-called scholarly studies have, at their core, an interest in improving the profession through research and criticism. So it's a bit of a false dichotomy to play one off against the other.

Speaking as someone with seventeen years in newsrooms as well as a Ph.D., I thought the piece was better at creating straw men than at examining the issues.

JOHN RUSSIAL  
Assistant Professor  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, Ore.

As a newly minted journalism professor (no Ph.D.) who spent more than twenty-five years reporting and editing, I generally agree with Wicklein's argument that it takes a good practitioner to teach good practices. But Wicklein's piece has an anti-intellectual tone that troubles me. I am convinced there is more to journalism than confronting crusty old desk sergeants, getting bad guys to 'fess up to their misdeeds, and writing fire stories in flawless AP style on deadline. And I think a "flatline" industry, which the newspaper industry has become (just look at the curve of circulation from 1960 through



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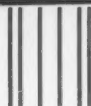
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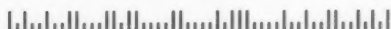
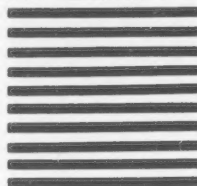
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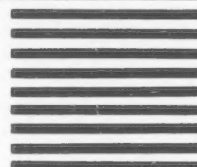
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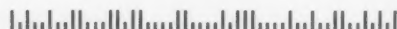
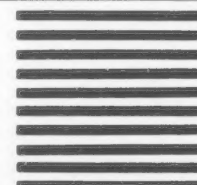
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today), could surely use some new thinking, some different approaches. Is it so impossible to imagine that some of those ideas might come out of the academy? After all, academic research has helped transform virtually every other field of endeavor, from agriculture sciences to social work.

What do other disciplines have that journalism lacks? Two things, it seems to me. One is that journalists, as a result of their historic preference for on-the-job training and instinctive distrust of elites, have no tradition of information exchange with academics. In nearly three decades of inhabiting newsrooms large and small, poor and rich, mediocre and outstanding, I have never heard an editor or manager (or reporter) say, "Did you see the article in *Journalism Quarterly* about . . ." Secondly, I know of few cases of industry support of "pure" or "basic" research. Yes, newspaper companies and their rich owners will give penurious amounts for scholarships, occasionally donate grand sums to have a building named after their sainted founders, and, infrequently, hire academics to "come in and teach us how to write better headlines." In fact, as an industry we have frequently ignored valuable academic efforts: research showing that readers are wary of unnamed sources dates back at least to the Kennedy administration, yet we persist in granting anonymity to sources with hardly a hesitation.

The list of topics that could be researched is endless. Has the investment in computer-assisted journalism improved the quality of stories? Does the reshuffling of beats to give them cuddly names really produce different stories? I would never suggest something as trite as a "new partnership" between the press owners and the academics, or a "blue ribbon panel" to study the issue. But I would propose a truce. Academics should try harder not to produce papers that serve only to increase the weight and density of their vitae. Journalists should try harder to glean the value from the research that is done. And both sides should attempt to identify opportunities for cooperation.

WENDELL COCHRAN  
Assistant Professor of Journalism  
School of Communication  
The American University  
Washington, D.C.

John Wicklein's article makes a cogent case for keeping scholars with little or no newsroom experience out of practical journalism classrooms. Unfortunately, Wicklein manages to get only half of the story.

Journalism programs are more than vocational institutes and their mission goes beyond providing well-trained employees for newspapers and chains. If, as journalism

educators, we are merely teaching students how to write leads or ingratiate themselves with precinct sergeants, we might as well pack it in and let Gannett and Knight-Ridder pay for their own training institutes. While reporting and writing should be at the heart of any journalism program, the larger purpose of programs should be to educate students about the one institution newspapers cover so poorly and newspaper reporters typically know little about: the press.

My professional experience is indeed invaluable to teaching practical journalism courses, but my newsroom experience did not equip me to teach students about the economic structure of journalism and its connections to the larger economy; the philosophical traditions that rose out of the Enlightenment and how far our press has strayed from providing an inclusive and aggressive "marketplace of ideas"; the century-old press conventions that continue to guide newspapers.

Wicklein laments the fact that faculty are being hired who cannot "teach students to cover city hall." A valid complaint, but, again, incomplete. Few journalists who have not had the opportunity for broad study and reflection on economic, philosophical, and historical issues can tell students much about why city hall is covered the way it is (and how it might be covered differently), why press coverage of the federal government is typically reduced to a clash of a few prominent personalities, why news coverage is often tailored to discrete markets rather than publics. Each new generation of journalists has the opportunity to change journalism, to do away with or refine dogma that leads news organizations to distort or fragment vital news rather than help readers gain insight and political empowerment. Learning only how to write good leads won't help good journalists do that.

Is there inane scholarship coming out of the academy? Yep. Just as inane news articles and editorials appear in the nation's press. In our department, faculty members' research into muckraking journalism, the place of journalism in popular culture, and the corporate roots of the press do much to enhance our classroom teaching.

The point is not that practitioners of journalism are in any way inferior as educators to educators who only have doctorates; the point is that educators are not simply trainers and that immersion in both the world of news and the world of scholarship is necessary to teach students how to "do" news and how to challenge the conventions of news-gathering to make journalism better.

MIKE DILLON  
Assistant Professor  
State University of New York  
New Paltz, N.Y.

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Winners are announced in the special journalism awards issue of *Quill*, with awards presented at the 1995 SPJ National Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The competition is open to all journalists.  
Submissions must be accompanied by an entry form, a cover letter and a \$60 fee.

Call or write for guidelines & entry forms.

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16 South Jackson Street  
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Judy Magyar, Communications Director

**Deadline for entries: February 1, 1995**



## WHAT GOLDEN AGE?

Thanks to Trudy Lieberman and CJR for mustering the courage to document the media's miserly coverage of consumer issues ("Whatever Happened to Consumer Reporting?" September/October).

But while we applaud your call to arms, we have serious doubts that a single report, written almost twenty years after the consumer movement lost its luster, will do much to convince publishers to abandon their long-standing practice of molding editorial content to advertisers' specifications.

The truth is, even during the watchdogging '60s and '70s, consumer reporting has hardly been a staple of the American news diet. A report Lieberman quoted found "at least fifty full-time consumer reporters and some twenty-five newspaper action line columns" in 1970. That might sound like an armada compared with today's head count, but when you consider the marketplace's mind-boggling size, its rapidly changing nature, and its pervasive influence on our economy, culture, and personal lives, the numbers are a joke. The sports reporters of Ohio outmanned the media's entire national force of consumer protectors in that year. Some golden age.

As long as news executives put Madison Avenue's interests first, consumer coverage will remain flimsy at best.

Lieberman should understand this well. Her employer, *Consumer Reports*, has provided consistent, accurate, and truly useful news to consumers for more than a half-century. The magazine has succeeded where other media continue to fail for one crucial reason: it refuses to accept advertising.

KATHY JONES

KRIS OSER

New York, N.Y.

Jones and Oser are New York City journalists who are launching a national nonprofit consumer newsletter for women, SHOP! The publication will not accept advertising.

## FLAG DAY AT SURIBACHI

Many readers, particularly Marines familiar with circumstances surrounding the historic flag-raising on Mount Suribachi, will take exception to Raymond A. Schroth's having picked up on the Marling-Wetenhall account of the event (Books, CJR, September/October).

Their statements, if correctly quoted by Schroth, that "the Marines public relations apparatus quickly made the original flag-raising and its photos a non-event" are simply gross factoids.

It was Lt. Col. Chandler W. Johnson, USMC, commander of the Second Battalion, 28th Regiment, Fifth Marine Division, which furnished the forty-man patrol that reached the mountaintop first, who ordered



Flag No. 2. He was a combat infantryman, not a public relations officer.

Flag No. 1, supplied by 1st Lt. H.G. Scheier, USMC, executive officer of E Company, Second Battalion, Johnson saw, was too small for the indescribable excitement of the moment to be shared by the beleaguered Marines on shore and the topside crews aboard the Navy's huge task force offshore.

Colonel Johnson said, "Some sonuvabitch is going to want that flag but he's not going to get it. That's our flag. Better find another one and get it up there and bring ours back."

He dispatched a Marine to the beach who obtained a larger flag from an LST beached there and then sent a four-man patrol to the Suribachi peak with it.

True, there were Marine public relations officers attached to the Marine landing force and several combat correspondents and photographers also, but the order to provide Flag No. 2 came from Colonel Johnson.

JOHN LOVELL  
Jackson, Calif.

*Lovell serves as coordinator of the Liversedge Memorial Group based in Amador County, California, honoring Brig. Gen. Harry B. Liversedge, USMC, native of Amador and 28th Regimental commander.*

Raymond A. Schroth replies: *In my review of Frederick Voss's Reporting the War, I referred to Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall's Iwo Jima to illustrate how Voss could have given a more in-depth—and more interesting—account of the famous flag-raising. I did not "quote" the authors, but summarized one of their themes: the role of public relations in constructing a myth that flowed from the flag-raising's photographs. According to Marling and Wetenhall, Lovell is correct that General Johnson ordered the second flag because the first was too small to be seen everywhere and thus boost morale. I should have made that clear. But their point is that the heroism involved in the first flag-raising and its photos were lost and forgotten when the public relations myth-makers, taken by the dramatic impact of Joe Rosenthal's picture, focused on the second, bigger flag. Rosenthal graciously autographed a copy of his photo for the Marine photographer who recorded the first event, "To Lou Lowery, who got there first..."*

## PRIVACY IN PARADISE

The remarks attributed to me in the "Letter from Hawaii" in your September/October issue do not represent my beliefs in regard to the extracurricular sexual activities of politicians. They are news when they affect qualification for public service or have impact on their performance in office. Otherwise, privacy is warranted, with the media, sometimes

unfortunately, being the judge of that. I don't know whom a politician could sue except an informant who was maliciously inaccurate.

A.A. SMYER  
Contributing Editor  
Honolulu Star-Bulletin  
Hawaii

## SNAGGED BY THE PROTOCOL POLICE

My paper breaks a few of the moribund rules of Journalism 101 so I figured it was just a matter of time before I was snagged by the Protocol Police. I was right (Darts and Laurels, September/October).

Yes, I took a paid trip from the Koll Company which, as you noted, I "was careful to disclose" in my complimentary story on its new Cabo del Sol resort. Koll, however, is not, as you noted, a "major" advertiser nor is it our landlord (although it is the property manager). A call to us to check the facts, one of the journalism rules we do believe in, could have avoided the inaccuracies.

Yes, we ran four pictures of a new golf course. When a local business completes a major project in Mexico we're inclined to give it big play. Also, many of our readers are golfers and vacationers, and the course's opening happened to coincide with our special section on travel, which is where the story ran. The photos referred to that ran on pages 1 and 2 were small "refer" photos to alert readers to the story inside.

My only regret about getting Dated is that it could give CJR readers the erroneous impression we're a second-rate paper. Since late 1990, we have gone from a paid circulation (ABC audited) of under 3,000 to more than 14,000—from one of the least-read to one of the most-read local business weeklies, during southern California's severe recession, no less. You achieve those results by serving the reader, even at the risk of defying professional orthodoxy.

RICK REIFF  
Editor  
Orange County Business Journal  
Newport Beach, Calif.

The editors reply: *Confirmation that Koll was a major advertiser was obtained directly from the paper's own advertising department; confirmation of Koll's ownership of the paper's building was obtained directly from Koll. If those statements, mentioned in passing in the Dart, were incorrect, perhaps Reiff, his ad people, and Koll should spend more time together. (Anyone for golf?)*

## CORRECTION

In the September/October issue, Marshall University's campus paper was misidentified; the correct name is the *Parthenon*.

## APPLICATIONS INVITED FOR

# TRI-LATERAL JOURNALIST EXCHANGE CANADA \* MEXICO \* UNITED STATES

APRIL - JUNE 1995

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- 3 Good to excellent command of the language of the host country.

The deadline for receipt of completed applications is November 30, 1994. For further information, and to obtain an application, please contact:

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by journalists aged 34 and  
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*Purpose:*

To recognize and further  
develop the abilities of  
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*Procedure:*

All entries will be judged on  
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or, in the case of series, up to seven  
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## Judging Panel

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John Chancellor, senior commentator, NBC News

Richard M. Clurman,  
journalist

Osborn Elliott  
professor of journalism, Columbia University

Ellen Goodman, columnist, The Boston Globe

Charlayne Hunter-Gault,  
national correspondent, MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour

Clarence Page  
columnist/editorial board, Chicago Tribune

Mike Wallace, correspondent, CBS News



# WHOWHATWHENWHEREWHY

## MR. WARREN GOES TO WASHINGTON

Washington journalists, take cover! You're under fire — not from grumpy lawmakers or White House flaks but from one of your own, James Warren, chief of the Washington bureau of the *Chicago Tribune*.

It's been one fusillade after another since Warren left Chicago for the bureau post last December and began to include in his Sunday column such subjects as the clubby ways of Washington. His number one target: TV/radio reporter/analyst Cokie Roberts, a fixture of the Washington press establishment.

In regular "Cokie Watch" installments, Warren has dubbed Roberts "a doyenne of Washington's mediocracy" who cozies up to lawmakers, pockets big money for speeches to lobby groups, and dispenses "aggressively conventional wisdom" for ABC News and National Public Radio. And he has chided Roberts and her husband, Steven U. Roberts of *U.S. News & World Report*, for such money-making activities as hosting some October "forums" at a Chicago bank, for what Warren says is \$45,000.

He has also assailed the Gridiron Club — the gaggle of press heavies who entertain power brokers with an annual white-tie dinner and campy skits — as a hoary relic of the bad old days when reporters cozied up to pols.

Warren's broadsides



The *Tribune's* James Warren

have the attention of the Washington press corps. "He's on a rampage," says John W. Mashek, a veteran Washington reporter for *The Boston Globe*.

In his *L Street Tribune* redoubt, a few blocks from Cokie Roberts's ABC News foxhole on DeSales Street, Warren lowered the volume on his portable CD player (Keith Jarrett on piano) and told me this was his first Washington posting and that upon arrival he had been amazed to learn that first-rank journalists regularly made big money by speaking to lobby groups — a "no-brainer" conflict of interest. Do his readers care? "I think if they knew they'd be outraged." Why the barrage against Cokie Roberts? "She offered an interesting example of a peculiar Washington TV-fueled dynamic in which fame and influence may have little direct bearing on professional achievement," Warren says. "I've never actually met her."

Well aware that some of his fellow Washington journalists consider him to be naïve, Warren nonetheless indicts the culture of Washington journalism — "a world in which access becomes a god" and "the rule is sucking up to power."

Roberts, the daughter of former House Majority Leader Thomas Hale Boggs, a Democrat from Louisiana, is a buddy of senior lawmakers and sometimes lends them a hand. In September she was a master of ceremonies at a tribute to House Republican Leader Bob Michel, who is retiring. Before an assemblage of VIPs including Bill Clinton, she gushed over Michel's "incredible good sense" and "wonderful love of

music." Although she did not return phone calls, she has told media reporter Howard Kurtz of *The Washington Post* that Warren's portrait of her is "so far from the reality of my life that all I can do is laugh."

Not everyone is laughing. "Here's a guy who came to Washington, knows nothing about these reporters, and smarts off a lot," says Jack Nelson, chief of the Washington bureau of the *Los Angeles Times*, and a veteran whom Warren took swipes at during an interview. "He'll find out what goes around comes around," Nelson says.

Should he expect a horse's head? Jim Warren, sleeping with the fishes? Press bigwigs might as well get used

## HARD NUMBERS

*From September's International Conference on Population and Development, in Cairo:*

Number of delegates at the conference	3,500
Number of journalists covering the conference	4,200
Number of chapters in the Cairo "Programme of Action"	16
Number of such chapters that discuss reproduction issues, including abortion	2
Number of stories in Nexis on the conference between September 3 and 15	1,371
Number of such stories that do not use the words "abortion" or "Vatican"	363
Duration of the conference	8 days, 8 hours, 45 minutes
Estimated increase in population during that period	1.9 million

Sreenath Sreenivasan  
Sources: *The United Nations, Nexis, Reuters, and The Earth Times*. Sreenivasan is a lecturer at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism and a free-lance writer.

to potshots. Although Warren can be a loose cannon, his press commentary is part of a trend. He's one of the "outsider" reporters who have recently been treating "insider" journalists like other power brokers, and writing about them. Ken Auletta of *The New Yorker*, for example, weighed in on September 12 with a widely read piece on the speaking-gig issue. Cokie Roberts was an example in that piece, too; Auletta estimated that she earned some \$300,000 for outside speaking appearances in 1993. (This year Roberts's agent sought to ban C-SPAN from covering a speech to a health lobby group because such coverage makes it harder to pull down fat fees. ABC has recently moved to prohibit its reporters from giving speeches to groups they cover "or might reasonably expect to cover," much to the displeasure of Roberts, Sam Donaldson, Jeff Greenfield, David Brinkley, Brit Hume, Ann Compton, and others, according to the *Post's* Kurtz.)

Friends say Warren is an iconoclast by nature. A stockbroker's son, he joined *The Star-Ledger* in Newark, New Jersey, as a general-assignment reporter in 1974 and three years later was hired by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, eventually covering labor and legal affairs. He hitched up with the *Tribune* in 1984 and was editing the Tempo feature section when he got the nod to go to Washington. He also wrote a media column that was sometimes rough on TV reporters. "He loves the attention" that comes from attacking other journalists, says a *Tribune* colleague in Chicago.

Warren is also trying to remodel the *Tribune's* Washington bureau along outsider-journalism lines. He overhauled the beat structure, creating, for example, a "power and influence" beat focused on lobbyists and other

power brokers. The goal, he says, is to "try to cover the place more as if we were foreign correspondents" and "report back to our audience about the strange ways of this town."

Easier said than done. Some of his own reporters participate in the insider rituals he scorns. Senior writer William Neikirk helped write the skits derided by his boss in a column headlined SHOW OF POWER: GRIDIRON CLUB MEMBERS COZY UP TO WASHINGTON'S HEAVYWEIGHTS. And one bureau reporter (not Neikirk) says the beat restructuring has been cosmetic and hasn't much changed actual news coverage. "If our Chicago readers are noticing anything, I'd be surprised."

Warren disagrees, pointing, for example, to a recent team-reported piece about activists turned policymakers, about how Washington absorbs its critics. But he acknowledges that it will take time to instill the right "habit of mind" in his troops. Presumably he doesn't have forever. He says he believes in term limits for most Washington reporters, newspaper bureau chiefs included.

Paul Starobin

Starobin is a reporter for the *National Journal* in Washington, D.C.

## NEWS YOU CAN CHOOSE

For a moment, it felt like something out of Paddy Chayefsky. Seven minutes into the August 20 late news, on CBS-owned WCCO-TV/4 in Minneapolis-St. Paul, viewers were given approval—even encouragement—to zap.

"So grab that channel-changer," said anchor Scott Reynolds, "and if you want the full story on weekend weather, the channel to watch is Channel 4 . . . But . . ." Co-anchor Amy Marsalis picked up, ". . . if a ten-second forecast is all the weather

you need, you can switch to Channel 23." Then Reynolds: "It's your choice. Next."

They weren't kidding. A full-screen graphic of a TV remote-control device illustrated their unprecedented pitch. Welcome to "News of Your Choice." For this experiment, which took place over three late-summer Saturdays, a low-risk schedule slot, WCCO executives purchased time on a UHF outlet, KLGTV/23, to run an alternative thirty-five-minute newscast. They were gambling that by giving restless viewers more room to roam, they could keep them from bolting.

The first and last segments of the twin shows were identical but in between, the audience could graze. On August 20, viewers could stick with 4 to watch a world news summary and almost three minutes of weather. Or they could switch to 23 to see alternative anchor Jonathan Elias display a show rundown and explain the expanded news hole: "If you choose to stay with us [on 23] we can report six more local stories"—with weather reduced to ten seconds.

Later, viewers could watch a five-minute local "Dimension" piece, about an urban church rescuing drug addicts, on 4, or seven short local and national pieces on 23; then they could pick either a full-length sportscast on 4 or a health roundup on 23. (The same commercials were shown on both shows.) "It was startling," says Minneapolis *Star Tribune* TV critic Noel Holston, impressed by the tryout. "You could get rid of sports

and the main weathercast [on 4] and pick up eight or ten or eleven news or feature stories [on 23]."

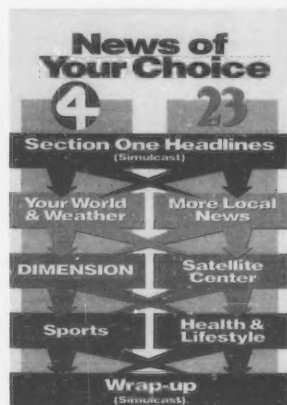
According to WCCO's news director at the time, John Lansing, 95 percent of the 500 people who called the station after the show were bullish

about it. "People sounded like they were working for our promotion department," he says. Such reaction helped WCCO executives decide in September to graft "Choice" permanently onto the top-rated weeknight 10 P.M. news, starting in January.

Still, the test showed at least one potential backfire. Early ratings showed sports and weather reports on 4 vulnerable to zapping, but not just to 23. Over at archival KARE (NBC), news director Janet Mason saw people moving not just to WCCO's companion channel but to hers. Once they start switching, she says, "we have as much of a chance of getting those viewers as Channel 23 does."

To grant people more influence over their nightly news diet seems an obvious stratagem to broadcasters. Against increasing competition, stations are struggling not just for bulk ratings but for younger viewers, who buy a lot of what's advertised. Minute-by-minute Nielsens show that group avidly channel-surfing, and stations are trying to respond creatively.

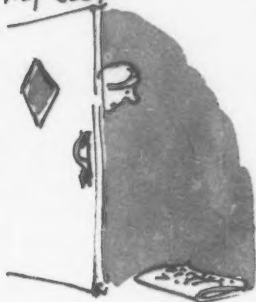
Some Channel 4 staff members found the experiment bracing. Says late-newscast producer Dave Rodrick: "The lament always is, 'We have no time, we have no space, there are a lot of things to tell view-



WCCO-TV's experiment: grab your zapper and pick

# Infotrapment by JIM FARRER

7AM: The Times is at my door.



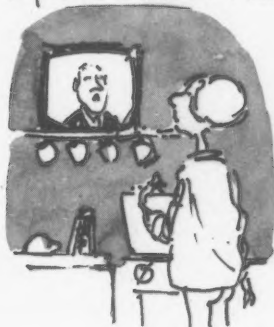
I drive to work. It's NPR.



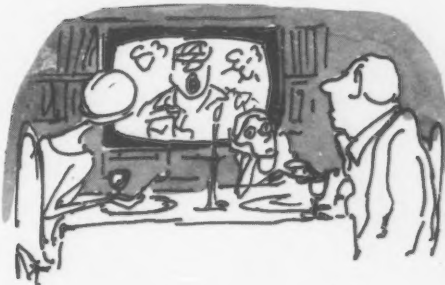
Over lunch: the tabloids.



I get home: the local news.



Over dinner: the network news.



I go to sleep: Nightline



Can't sleep: CNN.



More news, more frequent, faster-breaking than any time in history.



And what have I learned?

PRESIDENTS LIE.  
EVERYONE'S CORRUPT.  
EVERYONE'S VIOLENT.  
EVERYTHING'S WORSE  
NOTHING GETS FIXED.



## SOUNDBITE

**"A**n awful lot of reporters [in the South] were civil rights southerners. How much they hated segregation and how much they had a disdain for the Old South blocks them from seeing the New....They're more willing to try to understand Indians in India than they are to understand Americans outside their own prejudices."

*Republican Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia, in the August 1 New York Times.*

ers, and we just can't do it.' This doubles our opportunity to do it." Others were positive but wary, noting that more employees would be needed to keep quality high in both newscasts. (An executive says some hiring

is planned.)

Viewer power may prove essential to TV news's future. "The transformation that I think is taking place is from journalism as a lecture to journalism as a conversation," says David Bartlett, president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association.

Of course, there may be limits. Take WSJV, the ABC affiliate in South Bend, Indiana. Starting October 3, viewers of WSJV were to be shown "teases" as the 5 P.M. newscast began. Then they could call an 800 number to vote quickly for their favorite feature stories; only the top vote-getter would be broadcast. A news budget decided by an instant poll is probably too much for most television journalists. One veteran's reaction: "Oh my God."

*Jim Upshaw*

*Upshaw, a former television reporter, teaches journalism at the University of Oregon.*

## BURNED

### An Author Charged With Inciting a Crowd to Kill Him

In the summer of 1993 in Sivas, Turkey, a crowd of Islamic fundamentalists attempted to kill seventy-nine-year-old Aziz Nesin, the country's most famous writer, a journalist who is very vocal about secularism, by burning down his hotel. Although the crowd succeeded in killing thirty-seven other people, Nesin escaped. But he may not escape the government, which is trying to charge him with "inciting" the violence — against himself — by criticizing Islam. After Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasreen of Bangladesh, Nesin is the third writer to become a symbol of the dangers of an insurgent, intolerant, and fundamentalist Islam.

The charge against Nesin has not yet been accepted or rejected by the three judges who will rule in the hotel-fire trial. If it is accepted, Nesin could face the death penalty. The fact that the charge has been made at all, Nesin says, is an indicator "of how Islamic fundamentalism has entered the mainstream in Turkey."

The hotel-fire episode occurred when Nesin and a large group of secular Turkish intellectuals were attending a conference. At a number of mosques nearby, during the traditional Friday prayers, hundreds of fundamentalists were told by their preachers about the conference and about how Nesin, "the devil," was putting down Islam. They flooded out and gathered in front of the hotel where the conference was taking place, shouting "Death to the infidel!" Moments later, some people in the crowd started the fire.

Nesin was saved by firemen because he was mistak-

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The deadline for reservations is 11/21/94.

### COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

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en for a police lieutenant. As he was climbing down the fire truck's ladder, the firemen realized their mistake and started beating him; a member of the Sivas city council was shouting, "This is the devil we should have really killed." Nevertheless, he escaped with minor injuries.

Nesin says that immediately after the fire he was asked if he wanted to file complaints against the firemen or local authorities. "I told them, these individuals are not guilty. The system is. I blame past and present Turkish governments for these incidents. Their policies have deliberately brought Islamic fundamentalism to this dangerous point."

A humorist by nature, Nesin has written political and social satire in newspapers and magazines since 1944. He has also written 107 books highlighting the contradictions in Turkish society and received a number of international awards for his writing. Although Nesin has been critical of Islam for many years, he didn't become the focus of fundamentalists until he attempted to publish Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* in Turkish. While he was trying — unsuccessfully — to line up translators and publishers, the newspaper he was writing for at the time published excerpts from Rushdie's book.

After that, all hell broke loose: the printing house of the newspaper, *Aydinlik*, was raided by fundamentalists, who destroyed printing equipment; the issues of *Aydinlik* containing the excerpts were confiscated by the courts and the paper was charged with insulting the Prophet Mohammed (a trial is in progress); a Turkish businessman put a \$25,000 bounty on Nesin's head; and a number of Islamic clergy have given

fatwa (religious approval) that Nesin can be killed in the name of God.

Despite all this, Nesin has no plans to run away. He doesn't even have private bodyguards in Istanbul, where he lives. When this reporter visited him in August, Nesin answered the door to his apartment himself. "If the fundamentalists want to kill me, they will anyway," he says. "Why should another person die trying to protect me?"

Nesin often jokes about his own life and death. He has cancer, and the operations he's gone through have caused his sight to weaken. "I can't see what I'm writing down, but I manage," he says. "The only problem is when I answer the phone, talk for a few minutes, and then return to what I was writing, I forget what it was. I can't read it either. So I make a guess and continue. The funniest passages emerge that way."

Yalman Onaran

*Onaran is a research associate on the Balkans for the Committee to Protect Journalists.*

## THE NEWS EXPLOSION OF '95

### Local TV News: Will More Be Less?

In city after city across the U.S., 1995 promises to be the year of the great news explosion, as the biggest increase in local TV news programming in decades unfolds. And in newsroom after newsroom, TV journalists are not sure whether to celebrate or worry.

The explosion was triggered by events this spring, when a dozen stations in financier Ronald O. Perelman's New World Communications Group Inc.

## DO YOU SPEAK JOURNALESE?

Cunningly similar to English, Journales is the official language of American reporters and pundits, most of whom achieve fluency in this arcane tongue toward the end of their first full hour in any newsroom.

For instance, any celebrity you can't locate within two hours can be described in Journales as "in seclusion." Later, he or she will "resurface" (return your phone calls). An official who is "closely monitoring" some unfolding drama knows nothing about it, but will get back to you when he does. White House chiefs of staff are not obnoxious, they merely "do not suffer fools gladly."

Like menu descriptions (sun-dried, free-range), Journales is quite partial to hyphenated modifiers: "war-torn," "profit-driven"; "high-fashion shopper Ivana Trump"; "bit-part actress Marla Maples." Any military adventure conducted between midnight and 6 A.M. is a "pre-dawn raid." In English, people can be described as grim. In Journales they are "grim-faced."

Nonhyphenated phrases for the deeply irate are currently in fashion: "he is not a happy camper" or "he is having a bad hair day." According to a database search, "happy camper" peaked in 1993 and is well behind "bad hair day" in the 1994 sweepstakes.

Every so often an inexperienced reporter attempts to describe a dwelling as attractive or impressive. This is wrong. Journales allows only four adjectives to modify the nouns house and home: "stately" (big and impressive), "sprawling" (big and unimpressive), "modest" (nondescript), and "charming" (nice, but alarmingly small).

A cardinal rule of Journales is that one must appear totally balanced and fair-minded while doing someone in. *The Washington Post* wrote of Senator Alan Cranston that while "he has in many respects been a classic liberal . . . he has often found ways to accommodate his beliefs to monied interests."

Similarly, no Journales-speaker would ever suggest in print that Teddy Kennedy seems to be afflicted with male nymphomania. Instead they will remind us of Teddy's problem discreetly, as one *Washington Post* reporter did: "Teddy Kennedy, ruled by his passions for good or ill, will forever draw resentment from . . . etc., etc." (In advanced Journales, the implied lament about other people's overly judgmental style is highly prized.)

Foreign affairs Journales has its own idiom too. All stories about Japan should reveal that the country "is about the size of Montana," whereas all Haiti stories use the phrase "about the size of Maryland." Any leader of a one-man quasi-permanent government is referred to as a "strongman" or a "junta leader" while alive, a "dictator" thereafter. Note that "military strongman Raoul Cédras" is not balanced by "civilian weakman Jean-Bertrand Aristide."

John Leo

*Leo is a columnist for U.S. News & World Report.*

dumped their network affiliations and signed up instead with Rupert Murdoch's Fox Broadcasting Co. network, in return for a \$500 million investment from Fox. The jilted Big Three networks, meanwhile, began lining up new affiliates. The reshuffling has yet to play itself out.

As a result, many stations will alter their newscasts or create new ones. At the new

fare as *60 Minutes* or *Good Morning America*. Their rivals, in turn, both new network affiliates and still-independent outlets, are joining the competition by expanding or building new news units from the ground up. Once-sleepy TV markets are becoming veritable hotbeds. Station managers are suddenly loosening their purse strings — buying equipment, constructing sets, hiring reporters and editors.

So why do so many TV journalists seem as apprehensive as they are exhilarated about all this? Take Donn Johnson, who has worked as a reporter and anchor for sixteen years at KTVI-TV in St. Louis. Next year the station will switch its network affiliation from CBS to Fox, more closely identified with Bart Simpson than serious news. "We all know that this will add some spice to the city's news competition," he says. "But we wonder what *form* the news we will do is going to take."

For one thing, at the Fox stations at least, many reporters and producers wonder how the youth-oriented Fox lineup will mix with news shows, which generally attract older viewers. Others think an alliance with Fox, a network without a national news division, could mean scarce resources for news, reduced salaries, less experienced journalists, and weaker, tabloid-style broadcasts.

To be sure, there's little hard evidence of this in any market yet. Richard Hyde, news assignment editor for WAGA-TV in Atlanta, which is going to Fox after forty-five years with CBS, says, "I don't see us getting into a lot of blood and guts. We'll still be very conservative in our approach."

Executives at New World are more emphatic. "We will not 'Foxify' these stations," says Bob Selwyn, president of the company's television group. "They will retain their identity."

The goal, says Selwyn, is to make the stations dominate their markets through strong news programs. As evidence of its strong commitment to news, Selwyn says the company will spend \$17.5 million this year for programming, most of it dedicated to news. All of the outlets will add three-hour morning news shows to compete with breakfast programs like *Good Morning America*, along with noon, early-evening, and expanded late local news broadcasts. Newsroom staffs have already been boosted to between 100 and 125 employees, one-third larger than the current size of many New World stations.

"Five years from now, our stations will be perceived as the most important source of news in their markets," Selwyn says.

Alan Mirabella

Mirabella is the media reporter for Crain's New York Business.



Murdoch and the Simpsons

Fox affiliates, in places like Detroit, Atlanta, and Cleveland, stations will be doing as much as forty hours of additional news programming a week to replace such network



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## THE GREAT PAUL SPELMAN JOB TOUR

After fourteen cities and twenty-eight stations, it's all starting to blur together. Binghamton, Bangor, Burlington... Was it Burlington where the news director told me on the phone to stop by on Tuesday, and then took the whole week off? Or was that Florence? Or was Florence where the news director said he was tied up with meetings all day, while the receptionist later said he had already left for the beach?

Salisbury, Springfield, Savannah... I had a good interview in Springfield, but afterwards the news director told me he really wasn't supposed to speak to me until I had been selected and approved by the Human Resources Department as part of an eth-

nically diverse pool. "If anyone asks, we've never met," he said, taking a sidelong glance down the hallway. Or was that in Wilmington?

For six weeks I've been traveling up and down the East Coast in hopes of landing my first television reporting job. The Great Paul Spelman Job Tour, Summer '94; you've probably seen the T-shirts. I've been from Maine to Georgia, and what seems like every small television market in between. After Columbus, Georgia, where I'm writing this in a motel, I'll have met with nineteen news directors and dropped off my videotape and resume at another nine stations where the news director wouldn't see me. I had originally tried applying for jobs by mail. But after two months and only one phone call in response, I decided to leave my job and hit the road.

By now I've developed a routine: find the next small

### SOUNDBITE

"You people celebrate failure and ignore success. Nothing about government is done as incompetently as the reporting of it."

*Democratic Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts, in the October 1 New York Times.*

television market on the map, call the news directors a few days ahead and hit them with the pitch: "I'm Paul Spelman, a reporter from Colorado, and I'm looking to work in the East. I'll be in (Greenville, Harrisonburg, Plattsburgh, etc.) for the next two days. Is there any time I can stop by, introduce myself, and drop off a videotape?" This gets me a meeting with the news

director about two-thirds of the time, even if it's just for five or ten minutes. But that's really all I'm looking for, just some way to break through the clutter of the 100 or more tapes most news directors get for each job opening.

After I schedule a meeting, I drive to the city, scope out the exact location of the TV stations so I won't be late (they are generally easy to find — just look for the tower), and pull my reverse Clark Kent routine: I go to a mall or fast-food restaurant and change into my suit and tie in the restroom. After my quick change, I head for the station, catch up on the latest soap opera developments while waiting in the lobby (I hadn't seen a soap opera in about six years, but fortunately the plot lines seem to have advanced little in that time), and then tell the news director that I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and, doggone it, people like me. Then back to the mall. In one city, two

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**Writers for Newspapers with Circulation Under 100,000:** David Migoya, Belleville News-Democrat, Belleville, IL.

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At the end of a long journey, Paul Spelman (above, in photo montage) on the air

stations were near the same mall, and by the end of the day, mall workers were starting to wonder if I was casing the place.

The response from news directors has been encouraging, if not enthusiastic. Most tell me they'll consider me should a job open up. But they don't know when that will be and they certainly have a lot of applications. (It also seems that their standards for job applicants are considerably higher than they tolerate on their newscasts, although perhaps that's just

sour grapes on my part.)

In any event, the tour has definitely been a learning experience. I've found that you can never tell what kind of response you're going to get from a news director. One said he could only spare me a couple of minutes and then spent an hour and a half with me, discussing journalism and offering helpful suggestions. Another (names have been withheld to protect my employment chances) said he liked my work and thinks I'll do well, but added that despite my awards and three years in radio and print, I don't have enough experience yet. He then hired someone just out of school. Experiences like that tend to lower my morale, and I've had to learn not to panic and suddenly alter my job-hunting technique. By taking hostages, for instance.

I've also learned to think a few days ahead. I may not know exactly what I'm doing today, but I know that the news director in Savannah has agreed to see me on Thursday, that I can get more videotapes duped in Atlanta on Friday, get my suit and shirts cleaned over the weekend and then meet with the news director in Augusta on Monday. Then I'm headed up to Johnson City, Tennessee, so I better call ahead.

And somewhere along the way, I have to remember to get the car's oil changed again. I've put nearly 8,000 miles on it since I left Colorado. I hope those miles are tax-deductible, because the expenses have really started to add up. Videotapes, for example, are \$10 a pop. By the time I get a job I'll probably be filing for Chapter 11 at the same time I'm filling out my W-2 form.

But there are some invaluable resources that don't cost a dime. I've learned to find and use the library in nearly every city I go to. It's a good place to rest, read up on the

local issues, and look up more TV stations in the *Broadcasting & Cable Yearbook*. Libraries are also good for writing thank you letters to the news directors you just met and calling news directors you hope to meet. There's usually a quiet phone booth in the basement, right next to the old paperbacks.

The only mistake you can make in a library is to glance at one of those career books. I looked up Broadcast Journalism one day and it told me my job chances are slim. At this point, that's not really what I want to hear.

Paul Spelman

On September 1, Spelman began work at WWAY-TV in Wilmington, North Carolina, as a reporter. By the time he was hired, not long after writing this piece, he had applied to fifty-three stations.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### How an Independent TV Station Survives in Belgrade

Through the steam of a hot cup of espresso, the thirty-four-year-old editor-in-chief of Studio B TV in Belgrade, Serbia, grins like a Cheshire cat. "This cup of coffee," says Vlandan Radosavljevic, "is contributing to the independent press."

The coffee is from the Studio B Restaurant, a 200-plus-seat establishment that the broadcasting company opened three years ago in order to stay alive — and independent — in the country of Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian strongman. "The restaurant subsidizes more than half our monthly operating budget," says Radosavljevic, whose company trades TV advertising time

for the meat, beer, eggs, and other ingredients that go into the spicy Balkan dishes it serves. "We make very little money directly from advertising. The old bartering system is still very much in effect here."

Indeed, in a country where state-owned businesses are still more rule than exception, where trade embargoes, sanctions, and war make it tough to get dinner, let alone create good TV, earning an advertising buck is difficult. That Studio B, the largest media concern in the Balkans, must walk a tightrope with Milosevic, does not make it easier. "Because the government and the mafia dominate the economy and pressure state-owned industries and other businesses not to advertise with us, we were forced to find another way to support the company," says Radosavljevic, sipping his espresso.

The Serbian government has, on occasion, interrupted Studio B's transmissions, most notably on March 9, 1991, when the police stormed its offices during a broadcast of that day's big anti-war demonstration in Belgrade. But more often than not, Milosevic's efforts to rein in Studio B and its ilk have been less overt.

One measure of the government's attitude toward Studio B is its rejection of the station's bid to install transmitters that would extend its broadcasting range far beyond the Serbian capital. Eighty-six percent of Serbia's homes have TV sets, and until recently those sets have shown a constant diet of nationalistic propaganda via the state-owned television monopoly. Studio B is the only counterweight to this Milosevic-controlled medium, and it is limited to Belgrade, the only city in Serbia with a large intellectual community.

"You must imagine the United States with every little

CHUCK ONE

TV station taking exactly the same editorial line — a line dictated by David Duke,” says Milos Vasic, a founding member of the Belgrade weekly magazine *Vreme* (Time) and one of Serbia’s most respected independent journalists. Vasic and many others blame the state-controlled press monopolies, and television in particular, for building the intense nationalistic pressures that led to the savage conflicts in the Balkans. “Obstructing and pressuring independent journalists and other intellectuals,” he says, “has been the cornerstone of the nationalist movement and its propaganda of hatred.”

Vasic has his complaints about Studio B, notably its selling of advertising time during the 1993 parliamentary campaign to a candidate known as Arkan — a notorious paramilitary commander who is being investigated for war crimes — causing several reporters to quit in disgust. But on the whole, Vasic says, Studio B is “good to have around.”

In order to stay around, Studio B has started, along with the restaurant, a Studio B travel agency and a joint venture with a fledgling wire service called Beta. The hope is that Beta will operate outside of Milosevic’s reach, and that it will go after hard-cash contracts with embassies and foreign media. “If we get enough contracts, Beta could stabilize the whole company,” says Djordje Zorkic, a founder and senior editor.

Meanwhile, Studio B continues to offer a menu of varied perspectives on domestic and international affairs, along with stuffed peppers, honey-soaked breads, and shots of Slivovitz, a fiery and high-octane concoction made from plums.

Erin Condit

Condit has lived in Europe since 1989 and free-lanced for NBC, PBS, and NPR, among other news outlets.

## AN OUTSIDER AT TIME WARNER

In the fall of 1989, the big news at Time Inc. was the company’s merger with the Warner entertainment empire (see “Of Time & Integrity,” CJR, September/October 1989). Many journalists worried that the merger would threaten the separation of “church and state” — the editorial side of the operation from the business office — that was the legacy of Time Inc. founder Henry Luce. Church-state concerns have lingered, highlighted by the removal of the editor-in-chief from the company’s board of directors as part of a reorganization two years ago.

The big news out of Time Warner Inc. now is the appointment of former *Wall Street Journal* executive editor and vice president Norman Pearlstine as editor-in-chief, replacing Jason McManus, who is retiring. Pearlstine, only the fourth person to fill the position since Luce himself held it, has been roundly praised as a “journalist’s journalist and an editor’s editor” and a forward-thinking innovator with an eye for new talent and an ear for good ideas. He is touted as a man whose entrepreneurial savvy and knowledge of emerging communications technologies make him the ideal editor-in-chief to guide Time Warner into the electronic frontier.

Pearlstine, who will oversee *Time*, *Life*, *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Money*, *Fortune*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and the new *InStyle*, is also the first person in the company’s seventy-one-year history to be chosen from outside what had been generally considered a cradle-to-grave outfit. Current *Time* managing editor James R. Gaines and editorial director Henry Muller were both contenders for the job. Some insiders speculate that Muller was

passed over because his reign as *Time*’s managing editor was less than stellar, and that Gaines may not yet have enough executive experience. Gaines says Pearlstine’s appointment “may have been a momentary shock to the system, but it was only momentary.” He adds, “We could profit from the perspective of someone who didn’t grow up in the Time Inc. culture.”

Pearlstine says there’s no truth to rumors of house-cleaning at Time Warner in favor of former colleagues from *The Wall Street Journal*, rumors rife at the financial paper where Pearlstine worked for more than twenty years.

Another concern in the magazine division is Pearlstine’s relationship with Time Warner chairman and c.e.o. Gerald Levin. Both attended Haverford College in Pennsylvania and the University of Pennsylvania Law School, although Pearlstine says they did not meet until the mid-1980s. “We have no social relationship,” he says, angrily rebutting the notion that he’s in Levin’s pocket. But a high-level insider at Time Warner who asked not to be named says Pearlstine and Levin do indeed have ties, and that Luce’s vision of a wall between church and state is jeopardized when the editor-in-chief is linked too closely to the c.e.o.

Pearlstine says he’s firm on the issue of editorial integrity at Time Warner. “They have been extraordinary in their commitment,” he says. “And I expect that to continue.” And he dismisses his anonymous critics. “Skeptics are everywhere” in journalism, he says. “That’s what we’re trained to be.”

Jeff Gremillion

Gremillion is an assistant editor at CJR.



Norman Pearlstine, editor-in-chief

## FOLLOW-UP

### Another Round at the Inky

In the September/October issue, CJR reported that *The Philadelphia Inquirer* had begun firing some of its municipal correspondents, a group whose status has long been a bone of contention at the newspaper. The 175 correspondents voted to join The Newspaper Guild early this year and the guild maintains that eight correspondents were let go in retaliation. In September, the National Labor Relations Board said it had decided to charge the *Inquirer* with a violation of the National Labor Relations Act for firing the correspondents; if a settlement is not reached, hearings are expected within six months.

Sasha Abramsky

### Time vs. Ellis

CJR readers have been able to follow the dispute between *Time* magazine and former Reuters photojournalist Richard Ellis as it moved from CompuServe, where Ellis first complained about a misleading 1993 photo spread in the magazine, to the pages of *Time*, where James R. Gaines, its managing editor, wound up regretting the spread in a letter to readers (see “Sex for Sale,” CJR, September/October 1993, and “Phony Photos,” CJR, November/December 1993.) Now the dispute moves to the courtroom; Ellis has filed a \$33 million dollar suit against *Time* and Gaines, claiming that after he complained in the online network about the photo essay, which was about young male prostitutes in Moscow, *Time* complained to Reuters, a major *Time* photo supplier. Ellis, Reuters’s former chief photographer in Moscow, claims Reuters demoted him to a “low-level desk job” in London as a result, and he later left the company. Gaines had no comment.

Christopher T. Noller



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# The Triumph of Fuzz and Wuzz

When I started writing this column in 1981, it was easy to tell the difference between the *CBS Evening News* and, say, *Kojak*. *Hard Copy* had not yet been loosed upon the world. And rumor-sprinkled Hollywood-style coverage had not been transplanted wholesale here to Washington, where the presidential briefs-or-boxers question was still to be raised. Those were the days. Since then, we've been Top Cop-ed, Gennifered, and Bobbitted into a New World Infotainment Order that makes the tabloids of yore seem almost cerebral by comparison.

In the old days of yellow journalism ("you provide the prose-poems, I'll provide the war"), little could top a U.S. invasion of some exotic Caribbean isle: lives at risk, Big Stick in action, world taking notice. Today such a story is evidently too sophisticated to please mainstream journalism's tabloid gatekeepers, who have O.J. on the brain. Consider these examples of CBS's television coverage of Haiti:

Thursday, September 15, at 9:19 P.M., President Clinton, in Washington, winds up a dramatic speech preparing the public for an invasion of Haiti. He tells junta chief Lt. Gen. Raoul Cédras, "Your time is up."

CBS then switches to Dan Rather, live in Port-au-Prince. With him is Cédras, now the most important newsmaker in the Western Hemisphere. With a huge American armada off his coast, he is the man who could decide between bloodshed and peace, and CBS has him exclusively. Edward R. Murrow would be proud, for viewers can expect to see Cédras react to a barrage of tough questions probing for softness in his refusal to negotiate a bloodless transfer of power. These might include: How can your 900-man army possibly resist? Will you encourage paramilitary forces to wage guerrilla war?

But wait a minute. Rather is on for only about four minutes and has asked only a few questions — most importantly, Will you fight if invaded? — when he stops abruptly, yielding to a more pressing priority.

Rather: "We are going to come back a little later on, in the program *Eye to Eye* with *Connie Chung*, with more of General Cédras . . ."

CBS then goes to *Due South*, a two-hour premiere that had started at 8 P.M. and been interrupted. It is about an impossibly handsome Canadian Mountie pounding the beat in, of all places, Chicago. In one scene, he escorts a beautiful woman to a cab. Mountie (handing bills to cabbie): "Walk her to her door." Cabbie (examining bills): "This is *Canadian*." Mountie: "So is she." He clearly has a logic all his own.

But, then, so do the CBS bottom-line people. (Correspondent: "This assignment is *stupid*." News executive: "So is the audience.") When *Eye to Eye* appears, following the Mountie, Rather's promised "full interview" with Cédras does not materialize. After brief, pre-recorded highlights and a quick live update, Cédras, who speaks too softly and carefully to fit the villain's part, is shelved for

more ratings-rich fare: "astonishing ten-year-old whiz kid who goes to college"; mock jurors in the O.J. case; "the cop killer no one can catch" — all clearly more important to the Republic than a possible war. At the end, Rather — the same man who walked off the set in 1987 when the opening of his news broadcast was pre-empted by a tennis tournament — is back for a dutiful recap of the situation. There is also a little tabloid stereotyping: "Haiti, to those who didn't grow up here, is frequently a place where a sort of spooky feeling seeps in. Land of voodoo, drums, and mangos."

Now cut to CBS's Wednesday, September 21, edition of *Entertainment Tonight*. Rather is a guest, along with Roseanne and O.J. lawyers. The show's intro has lightning-quick jump-cuts between images of O.J., Rather, and Roseanne, subliminally equating them. Host Mary Hart effusively congratulates Rather on his Cédras interview "coup" ("It was absolutely remarkable . . . it was incredible . . .") and Rather — live from Port-au-Prince, in safari jacket, hairy chest exposed — bows his head humbly. Hart then pushes to squeeze some drama, reducing Haiti to a Rather-in-danger story. She asks about risks. He replies in Gary Cooper fashion ("It goes with the territory") and evokes his belief in God, clearly into the part.

This is the same Rather who once complained: "They've got us putting more fuzz and wuzz on the air." In that case, he was right. Most people have little spare time and only finite space in their attention box. When it is filled every day for years with wuzz and fuzz (e.g., *Newsweek's* September 12 cover article, eleven full pages on James Carville and Mary Matalin: "Spin Doctors in Love"), rational discourse on such matters as military intervention diminishes; civic ignorance mounts; and each time we play Russian roulette at the ballot box there is another round in the chamber.

Denouncing tabloid mania is now something of a craze itself. TV discussion shows address such questions as whether the hyper-publicized O.J. — whose picture is flashed repeatedly during such segments — can get a fair trial. The beauty is that these forums can be used simultaneously to deplore sensationalism and indulge in it. For example, a July 25 *U.S. News & World Report* article skewering "The Seamy World of Tabloid TV" dolloped its cover with photos of O.J., the Menendez brothers, the Bobbitts, Nancy Kerrigan, Tonya Harding, and Joey Buttafuoco. I'd like a two-fer as well, so I've asked my editors to illustrate this column with a shot of Michael Jackson. He isn't discussed here, but the substance doesn't matter. It's the sensation that counts.

**Christopher Hanson**

Christopher Hanson is Washington correspondent for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and a contributing editor of *CJR*. Videotapes were provided by the Media Research Center in Alexandria, Virginia.



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# Darts & Laurels

◆ **DART** to *The New York Times*, for ignoring a crucial bit of monkey business. In a June 14 bylined profile filed from Yugoslavia, reporter Roger Cohen went positively ape over one Vukosav Bojovic, director of the Belgrade zoo, pointing to his affable demeanor, inimitable devotion, and superhuman strength in "turning the zoo into one of this city's most admired institutions." Seeing and hearing and saying only good things, the piece overlooked some fundamental facts reported by, among others, Reuters and The Associated Press: that Bojovic had been indicted for his alleged participation in an elaborate 1990 scheme to deliver six baby orangutans from the Indonesian rainforest to a quasi-government trading company in Moscow in return for two baby siamang gibbons; that both orangutans and gibbons, being among the most endangered species on earth, are protected from such commercial trade; and that, in the eyes of the United States, Cohen's "jolly . . . folk hero" is a fugitive from justice.

◆ **DART** to the Reno, Nevada, *Gazette-Journal*, for playing roulette with its credibility. In its July 30 issue the paper announced that the Promus Cos., Inc., parent company of Harrah's Casinos (one of the biggest businesses in Reno), had elected to its board of directors Susan Clark-Jackson, senior group president of Gannett's Pacific Newspaper Group and president and publisher of the Reno *Gazette-Journal* (which covers gaming and Harrah's on a regular basis). "Susan Clark-Jackson brings a unique perspective to our board of directors," Promus chairman Michael D. Rose was quoted as saying, presumably with a poker face. (The ethics section of the paper's employee's handbook includes the following rule: "Employees will not have any outside interest, investment, or business relationship that dilutes their loyalty to the company or dedication to the principle of a free and impartial press.")

◆ **LAUREL** to *The Seattle Times* and aerospace reporter Byron Acohido, for landing squarely on a story that affects the public safety — and the public image of the company in that company town. In the wake of the September 8 crash of a USAir Boeing 737

twinjet near Pittsburgh in which 132 people lost their lives, the *Times* moved quickly with a series that revealed, among other things, that some 2,200 other Boeing jets currently operate with potentially malfunctioning parts similar to one that might have caused the Pennsylvania crash. Based on a review of more than 500,000 Service Difficulty Reports filed by airlines from 1974 through August 1994, Acohido's articles documented the troubled history of the malfunctioning part, the recent move by the FAA to require that airlines replace it, and the resisting winds of industry economics that ultimately prevailed, allowing a five-year span in which to install the safer units. Acohido's series also quoted a Boeing spokesman's claim that such improved parts had been retrofitted on the entire fleet of more than 2,600 737s, including the doomed USAir twinjet — a statement that, as Acohido's subsequent report made clear, turned out to be untrue. Meanwhile, investigations into the crash continue on their way, as do those 2,200 vulnerable planes.

◆ **DART** to Kevin G. DeMarrias, of the Bergen County, New Jersey, *Record*; to Joanne Weintraub, of *The Milwaukee Journal*; to Linda Fantin, of the Pinedale, Wyoming, *Roundup*; and to Deborah Lohse, of *The Wall Street Journal* — recent candidates, all, for membership in the Curious Coincidences Club. DeMarrias's May 4 "Savvy Shopper" column, headed STORE BRANDS GAINING FAVOR, had similar substance and a nearly identical lead to a story by business writer Cliff Edwards that had moved on the AP wire the day before. Almost half the passages in Fantin's March 17 piece on the choice of Wyoming as the site of a countercultural convention echoed those in a piece by Craig Welch that had appeared in the *Jackson Hole Guide* on March 16. Virtually every word, phrase, and sentence in Weintraub's June 20 item on the creation of a new "gay beer" (except for an opening "according to *Newsweek*") repeated those in the original *Newsweek* piece. As for the New York-based Lohse, her September 9 Your Money Matters celebration of the many virtues of the au pair program seemed clearly aimed at counteracting a three-part series, published in mid-August by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, that exposed the dangers of the program — so why did her piece take no notice

whatsoever of that critical *PD* series (and how come so many of her sources happened to be in Ohio)?

◆ **LAUREL** to the Springfield, Massachusetts, *Sunday Republican*, and reporter Jack Flynn, for giving full court press to the unbalanced relationship between the city and its basketball Hall of Fame. Ten years after a deal in which the city agreed to provide a new \$11.4 million prime riverfront home to the old sports museum across town in exchange for a share in its future profits, Flynn revealed, not a single penny had dribbled its way into the city's coffers; his two-part analysis (beginning June 12) told why. Based on a review of thousands of pages of city and museum records and on interviews with dozens of participants in the deal, the articles pointed to low interest on the part of the watchdog commission, which dissolved itself in the late 1980s; high expenses (notably the director's salary and perks) on the part of the museum; and wide management lapses on the part of city hall, which made no effort to extract payment or to monitor the project. By the end of August, Flynn was reporting that city officials had ordered a long-overdue audit and were negotiating with the museum for better terms.

◆ **MINI-DART** to the Victoria, British Columbia, *Times-Colonist*, for clinging to the notion that a headline must be clever, no matter how sticky the subject. The *Times-Colonist's* grabber of May 14: **TEFLON'S INVENTOR SLIPS OFF AT AGE 83.**

◆ **DART** to *The Toronto Sun*, *The Toronto Star*, and *The Brantford Expositor*, for steering their readers down a narrow one-way street. When the Green Lite Information Corporation, a phone-in consumer service that provides subscribers with car-dealer invoice costs on new cars and average trade-in prices on used cars, approached the papers about placing an ad, they flatly refused — afraid, according to a June 29 story in *The Globe and Mail*, of wrecking their good relations with car dealers. Meanwhile, several smaller papers did give the go-ahead to the Green Lite ad; at last report, their relations with dealers were rolling along without the slightest dent. So much for defensively driven advertising practices; for a more offensive model, consider the letter that Brian L. Long, director of advertising for *The Tribune-Democrat* in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, sent to local car dealers who were boycotting the paper following publication of a July 9 column in which editorial-page editor Bruce Wissinger shared the lessons he learned from his bumpy experience in shopping for a car. "I'd like you to know that few people at *The Tribune-Democrat* support (or endorse in any way) the sophomoric, petty, foolish, wisecrack ramblings of a would-be editorial-page columnist," wrote Long. "I'm certain that tens of

thousands of other Cambria and Somerset Countians share my sentiments. They are not likely to lend much sympathy to a writer who airs his misguided impressions about shopping for a product or service in the newspaper. For them, the newspaper is a source of information."

◆ **LAUREL** to the Fort Lauderdale, Florida, *Sun-Sentinel* and reporter Larry Keller, for keeping an eye on the ball (and chain). Never forgetting his 1990 story about the (denied) request for a retrial by one Christopher Clugston, who after two hung juries and conviction by a third was serving a life sentence for a murder he claimed he did not commit; and learning early this year that the governor was (reluctantly, in this anticrime political climate) considering Clugston's appeal for clemency, Keller reopened his investigation, detailing the inconsistencies and contradictions that from the beginning had marked the case. By July, the story had been picked up by *NBC Now*, a new witness had come forward to support Clugston's claim, and the governor's mercy had become unstrained. After eleven years at the Madison Correctional Institution — during which he acquired the HIV virus, the result, he says, of a rape — Clugston was free to go home.

◆ **DART** to the *Vineyard Gazette*, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, for an oh-so-heavenly book review that circled around the son. In a 900-word assessment of *Galileo: A Life*, free-lance writer Mark Alan Lovewell praised the "great skill" of the biographer, the "fascination" of his subject, and the "staying power" of the work. The reviewer also went out of his way to find a local angle: "You ask what the Vineyard connection is?" he wrote. "The author, James Reston Jr., is a longtime summer visitor to the Vineyard. And there is another, grander connection. Anyone who has ever marveled at the beautiful skies this Island offers on a cool dry night will understand that our own window to the universe opens through the science of astronomy." Other "grand connections" were out of sight: Mary Jo Reston, the paper's publisher and general manager; Richard Reston, its editor and publisher; and Sally Fulton Reston and James Reston, chairmen of the board.

◆ **DART** to the Crystal Lake, Illinois, *Northwest Herald*, for overzealous application of traditional terminology when describing a certain type of sexual orientation. Headline over a September 5 story about the negative reaction of some World War II veterans to the Smithsonian's treatment of the historic flight of the *Enola Gay* to Hiroshima in August 1945: **ATOMIC BOMBERS CRITICIZE ENOLA HOMOSEXUAL EXHIBIT.**

*This column is compiled and written by Gloria Cooper, CJR's managing editor, to whom nominations should be addressed.*

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# THE OF A - education journalist

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by David Halberstam

**I**n early April 1956 a few days after my twenty-second birthday I went to work as a general-assignment reporter on the Nashville *Tennessean* for \$75 a week, starting what would be four of the happiest years of my life. Just a few weeks earlier my brief nine-month tour as the one reporter on the West Point, Mississippi, *Daily Times Leader* had abruptly come to an end. Henry Harris, the editor and owner, was underwhelmed by my free-lance writing for *The Reporter* magazine and had told me that it was time for me to go. "You're free, white, and twenty-one," he had said. So I had called Hodding Carter (the father of the former State Department spokesman), the founding publisher of the *Greenville Delta Democrat* and a friend, and he had connected me to Coleman Harwell, the editor of *The Tennessean*. When I showed some reluctance about taking a job in Nashville, Hodding pushed me toward it. "It's the best stepping-stone paper in the country," he told me.

To call *The Tennessean* the best stepping-stone paper in the country does not, almost forty years later, do it justice. It is true that it was a great launch-

ing pad for any number of young reporters who dreamed of working for national papers, and over a period of fifteen or twenty years it became something of a magnet for talented young people. And it is true that in the space of one year Scotty Reston, then head of the Washington bureau of *The New York Times*, offered jobs to three *Tennessean* staff members, Tom Wicker, me, and John Seigenthaler (Tom and I accepted, and Seig, already on leave working for Robert Kennedy, chose to stay on as Bobby's personal assistant). But it was far more than a stepping stone, a newspaper first and foremost and not a property, and a symbol of journalism practiced in a very different age, when it was practiced most certainly for profit, but not for profit, and thereby a place probably unrecognizable to anyone accustomed only to today's papers, which are part of great chains and where the feeling of independence and zest is clearly secondary to the compelling obsession with the bottom line.

The contrast between that somewhat disheveled city room and altogether too many of the modern airless city rooms in mid-size papers I visit today is quite striking. These modern city rooms smack of too much order and too much cleanliness, and of a computerized news

hole, one utterly immune to the events of the day, but guaranteeing that the paper will never have so much news that the advertising total shrinks for even a day, thereby forcing the chain's stock to drop even a fraction of a point. There is a feeling in these new clinically modern city rooms that someone is always watching over the newsroom, but that unfortunately, the someone is an accountant.

There was nothing antiseptic about *The Tennessean*. It was a joyous, combative, aggressive, and wildly independent place, staffed by a rare assortment of talented people who probably would not have been hired by any other respectable place. It was a rare paper in the sense that it had an institutional value system all its own, and to earn the respect of your colleagues you had to meet that value system, in terms of diligence, passion, and integrity. It was not something set down in a booklet, and it was never codified, but that did not make it any less real; rather the value system was painstakingly put together over a number of years by the paper's reporters and editors them-

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*David Halberstam is writing a book about the young people he covered during the sit-ins in Nashville in 1960 and what happened to the rest of their lives.*

selves. They were talented, idiosyncratic colleagues of courage and independence and high ambition, but ambition always tempered by accountability. It was a place completely without careerism. It was impossible not to admire those standards and to want the respect of your peers. The entire city room admired Wally Westfeldt for his civil rights reporting. We all thought he should have won a Pulitzer for his coverage of Little Rock.

The paper had been bought in receivership during the Depression by Silliman Evans, a Texas populist with strong New Deal connections, and that Texas liberal populism formed the core of the paper's political stance over the next thirty years. Silliman Evans Sr., who had died by the time I arrived, and his two sons, Silliman Jr. and Amon Carter, were unpretentious people. They lived simply and their only concession to wealth was to drive rather new Cadillacs, as befit the proprietary class in those days. Financially the paper was securely in the black. How much, no one knew, but it probably made somewhere between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 a year. No one seemed to care very much about money, and we spent handsomely when we were chasing stories that mattered. We thought of it as a paper, not a property, although in time this middle-sized, always outspoken and often outrageous newspaper took on a new financial value, and was sold to Gannett in 1979 for \$50 million.

By the time I arrived, the paper's recent history was particularly rich. Two years after the Brown decision, most other Southern papers — most notably the powerful *Commercial Appeal* in Memphis — were looking the other way on the issue of race, both on their editorial pages and in their news columns. But *The Tennessean* had decided with the coming of the Brown decision to cover racial developments aggressively, indeed, if need be, combatively. In the

old and not very pleasant political vernacular of the era, we were the nigger-lover paper.

One night during the riots in Clinton, Tennessee, a woman called in late at night to berate us for our coverage of race and went on a tirade for about twenty minutes; it was John Seigenthaler, then a swing city editor and reporter, who talked with her, agreeably it seemed to us, gathered around the city desk, and to her as well I am sure, showing great patience and courtesy. Then at the end of their talk he said he wanted to ask her just one question. "Why go right ahead, young man," she said, and Seigenthaler said, "I just wanted to know, ma'am, if you're white or black?"

The dominating force was Coleman Harwell, the formidable editor of the paper. There were in those days many liberal men who were uncomfortable because they were editors of papers considerably more conservative than they; Coley Harwell, I always thought, was the reverse, a scion of an older, rather aristocratic Nashville family, a Sewanee graduate, a deeply conservative man emotionally and culturally, who was the editor of a paper more liberal than himself. He was an austere and demanding figure, distant with almost all of us, and the tension between his natural conservatism and the sense that the region around him was changing rapidly and that his paper was a force for that change produced all sorts of contradictions within him and with his staff. The orbital thrust of his paper offended his oldest friends, the people he had grown up with in Belle Meade, which was upper-class Nashville, and when he went to the Belle Meade Country Club they gave him, we knew, a hard time. He insulated us from that pressure and anger, and never talked about it, but I think his was never a very easy life. If he appeared to be the most conventional of men, he was nonetheless willing to hire all kinds of offbeat, eccentric reporters — people

as different from him in style and manner as it was possible to be, and reporters whose work was surely going to cause him grief, and he set in motion a newspaper of rare audacity and courage.

Though distant from us and the paper, he knew everything that went on there, and his touch was on every aspect of the paper. When I worked up a long and extremely damaging story on John Kasper (then tearing up East Tennessee as a segregationist, and causing riots throughout the state) and his volatile life as an early hippy in Greenwich Village, Coley said he would print it only if I confronted Kasper in person — a phone interview was not sufficient — and if I was accompanied by another reporter. So Fred Graham, then my roommate and later a CBS court reporter and now anchor for Court TV, and I drove to Bessemer, Alabama, a great center of the Ku Klux Klan, where Kasper was addressing steelworkers who were also Klan members. It was one of the roughest crowds I had ever seen. We looked around and were both absolutely terrified. We waited through the evening, one devoted largely to baiting of blacks and Jews, then as inconspicuously as possible we sidled up to him. I asked my question, Graham watched, and then we got the hell out of there as quickly as we could.

Our managing editor was Bill Churchill, a kind and gentle man who had worked for *Life* as a picture editor, and was always quoting the first sentences of Hemingway novels to us and imploring us to write more like Hemingway, an appealing request since we all wanted to write like Hemingway anyway. Ed Freeman was the city editor, a lovely man, full of good will, anxious to make sure that Coley Harwell's dictates were fulfilled. On one occasion I was assigned to interview someone that Coley had wanted interviewed, an assignment given with the clear expectation that certain points would be made. I went out and interviewed the man, and in time came back. "Did it go well?" Ed asked. Yes, I said, I thought it had. "And he said these things didn't he?" Ed said,



Halberstam covered the police in northeast Mississippi and later at *The Tennessean*. "The police beat was the great test for young reporters...trying to develop their own definition of personal integrity."

# There is a feeling in new clinically modern over the newsroom, but unfortunately, that

enumerating the various points that Mr. Harwell had clearly expected to be in the story. "Well actually, no, he didn't, Ed," I said. For a moment his face, always optimistic in situations like this, fell and a frown passed over it. Then he brightened again. "But he *meant* to say them, didn't he?" he said.

We had few sacred cows, although the name of Sonny Tufts, a onetime popular singer, was one. Apparently there had once been a dance in town and Sonny Tufts had sung at it and Silliman Evans Sr. had asked him to sing a particular favorite, and Tufts, quite drunk, had refused, and Evans had announced angrily that he was Silliman Evans, the publisher of *The Tennessean*, and Sonny Tufts had reached in his pocket and pulled out a nickel and given it to Mr. Evans and told him to buy a newspaper with it. Sonny Tufts's name did not go in our newspaper.

Because we were ahead of the region on so touchy a subject as race we were never particularly popular with the general public; instead, as happened to me a few years later in Vietnam, we took solace in each other's friendship. The lack of general popularity fostered a collegiality and indeed a camaraderie that I think was probably uncommon in newspapers then and certainly since. Not only were we each other's friends, but there was an assumption long after you left the paper that someone like Jim Squires who worked for *The Tennessean* in a different era was a friend and colleague too. It was a funky place. Few of the reporters who came through there at the time seemed in those years destined for journalistic glory; we were the exact opposite of a particular kind of reporter I began to notice years later when I went overseas, a type that showed up more regularly on the staffs of newsmagazines where, before the coming of bylines, it was hard to tell who was really talented: someone who knew all the right names of all the other foreign corre-

spondents, and told the right stories and had been to the right schools and wore the right clothes — someone who would make a good impression if Harry Luce or the *Newsweek* top brass happened to come through — someone, above all else, who lunched well.

**W**e were as different from that as could be. There was nothing about us, in our past performances, in our personal style, in our dress code and our personal grooming that would lead anyone to think we were candidates to be Most Likely to Succeed. Nat Caldwell was our best investigative reporter, a man who had never been to college, a country slicker if there ever was one, a man whose best stories had to be interpreted rather than edited by the desk from Caldwell-speak, a rare elliptical back-country white patois that few others could understand, and a man no other paper would have hired or, for that matter, been able to comprehend.

The normally ambitious young men of our time — there were very few women in those days — wanted to make as much money as possible in as conventional a setting as possible with as large a company as possible. We, by contrast, were doing something that not only paid very little in the present, but promised to pay not very much more in the future. We were the kind of people who were good at the one thing we had chosen to do and were probably terrible at everything else, the kind of men who as boys had been told again and again by teachers that we could get far better grades if we would only choose to work harder. My wife is convinced at this late date in my life that I suffer from ADD, Attention Deficit Disorder, and she can cite all kinds of compelling reasons for her view (constantly impatient, readily bored, an errat-

ic student, low ranking in my college graduating class, still restless in all professional meetings, terrible at following road directions on the highway or dealing with the instructions on the box of some new product, but singularly focused and driven in my professional life). I am inclined to think she is right, but I am inclined as well to suspect that almost every good reporter I have known falls into somewhat the same category.

*The Tennessean* in those years was just beginning to reflect the profound changes taking place in journalism as it stumbled toward being a profession. Most of the older reporters were from the general mid-South region, had not been to college at all in many cases, or had briefly attended a local college for a year or two. The new breed whom Coley Harwell was now hiring, and of whom Westfeldt, having joined the paper three years before me, was the first, came more often than not from outside the immediate region. These newer, younger reporters were usually better educated, but were often less naturally gifted, and of course less senior in the city room. The two types blended surprisingly well; if the new breed was a little more Ivy in dress, and more anxious to go on to bigger papers, then the old breed often wrote better, knew the terrain better, and controlled the desks. Most of all they were marvelous colleagues, generous and open and patient, men from whom you could learn a great deal.

Being from Harvard was neither an advantage nor a disadvantage, although the men on the desk liked nothing more than catching one of the new boys in some simple territorial mistake — if you said a certain street was in East Nashville, and it was not, you would be walked to the giant map near the city desk by a desk man and be asked to locate it in East Nashville. Those of us who were the new hires overcame our cultural limitations only by taking on the paper's toughest



# city rooms that someone is always watching someone is an accountant.

stories, often the police stories, and handling them well. I did not realize at the time that we new hires signalled a kind of sea change not only in the nature of journalism but in the kind of person who was being hired to practice it.

If there was a dominant figure on the paper in those days it was John Seigenthaler, who seemed to connect the two cultures to each other. He was a local boy, son of a building contractor who had died young, and he was the oldest of eight children. There were Seigenthaler brothers and cousins all over Nashville, placed there, it sometimes seemed to me, for no other reason than to help him on stories. John had never finished college, but he had the natural brilliance of a man so supple that he did not even comprehend, I think, the full range of his own skills. He had originally gotten a job because a relative, Uncle Walter as he was known to everyone, worked in the paper's circulation department, but Seig had quickly turned out to be the most agile and accomplished reporter on the staff. He was the first example I had ever seen of the journalist as a kind of genius, his intuition about someone's behavior and conduct so shrewd and compelling that it enabled him to ask the perfect anticipatory question that surprised people and got them to talk — they talked to him, it seemed, because he had managed to signal to them that he already knew exactly what had happened, and so therefore they might as well tell him the truth.

He was also, among other things, a world-class practical joker, and no one was safe from him. If Russ Finney, the state editor, came in having bought fresh eggs in the country, it was Seig who took them out and had them hard-boiled. If Huston Horn, then our best feature writer, had a tendency when he came in from the police beat at 2 A.M. to slip over to the desk of Bill Churchill and flip covertly through Churchill's memos from Coley

Harwell, it was Seig who drafted a fake memo about Horn's Thanksgiving feature story. "That maudlin gushy story ruined one of the finest Thanksgiving meals I ever had," it began. Seig placed it in among the real memos. The staff was tipped off and Seig waited patiently for Horn to arrive, go through the memos, and then as he was leaving the city room about 2:30, by now quite depressed, yelled out with unusual bonhomie, "Hey Huston, how are you today — how're you feeling, old buddy?" "Not so good," Horn replied. "Some days it just isn't fun to go to work."

We competed with a rare ferocity with the *Nashville Banner*. It was the afternoon paper, with different ownership, but housed in the same building, and we hated each other with a passion that I still feel. We loved beating the *Banner*. The two papers disagreed on everything. One summer the entire city was divided between daylight time and central standard time; I have since forgotten which paper took which side, but it was a time of chaos, and every announcement that included anything to do with time had to be checked — was it daylight or standard? The clock in front of the building said in the mid-afternoon 3 P.M. on the *Tennessean* side, and 2 P.M. on the *Banner* side. Or perhaps vice versa. The *Banner* supported one set of candidates for every office, we supported another. In general our statewide candidates accepted the Supreme Court decisions and theirs wanted to turn back the clock. Fortunately for us as reporters in those years, the *Banner* had its man in City Hall as mayor, which meant that the *Banner* reporters were fed stories that reflected well on the local officials and cops, and we were free to go after anything we wanted to.

I am intrigued in retrospect that though *The Tennessean* was a decidedly liberal paper for that time and region, it was not a guild paper. There were periodic attempts to organize it, but they

always failed, in part because Silliman Evans gave everyone a \$5 or \$10 raise each time there were rumblings about organizing a union, but more importantly because the staff itself was so idiosyncratic, indeed eccentric, and so stunningly loyal to the paper (rather than to management, although we did not see management as being different from the paper itself) and because, I suspect, each reporter thought in his own way that the paper paid fairly, and that if it did not, that was a personal matter between him and Mr. Harwell.

I was aware at the time what a great learning experience it was. I studied very deliberately how to work a story. The paper was famed for its investigative reporting and there were a number of very good reporters who knew how to dig, and I could watch them work a story from the city room every day and then I could go out to dinner at night with them and talk about how they put that story together and, in the process, soak up the lore and the technique of the paper and the profession, learning through osmosis, if nothing else. If I had stayed behind in the East, I might have been one more copy boy on the *Times* or *Post*, bringing coffee to older men who were too busy to talk with me about what they did.

I, of course, wanted to cover civil rights, and in time I did, and perhaps along with my reporting from Vietnam I am most proud of the reporting I eventually did during the sit-ins in Nashville in 1960. But in truth what I learned there more than anything else were two things quite different from what I had intended to learn: how to work a story when people do not want to talk to you, which is no small thing, and how to handle myself in adversarial circumstances. What I was learning was something that is not in any journalism books, in no small part because it cannot be learned from a

# The word "nigger" was bait; use it and the cops might give you help on a story.

book, and because the people who write books on journalism haven't practiced it themselves. I, like many reporters before me, learned more about this from covering the police beat than anything else.

**T**he police beat was the great test for young reporters, particularly those who were like me, young and Eastern and Ivy-bred and in some way or another in this profession that was without rules, trying to develop their own definition of personal integrity. It was where the paper tried to find out how much inner strength its young reporters had. It was the least genteel of places. If the Nashville cops, befitting a moderate, border-state capitol, were not the pure enforcers of segregation that cops in the Deep South often were (that is, their prime responsibility each day being to keep black people in their place, and all other services they provided largely incidental), then they, as a breed, tilted far more toward segregation than integration. They were not fond of *Tennessean* reporters in general — in part because politically they were connected at the top to the *Banner*, and in part because most of them hated what we stood for on race. They were rough, hard, unsentimental men, clannish with a culture of their own. They did not like people who were different from them, but they also did not like, I suspect, people they could bully and bend.

Anything you got from the cops as a *Tennessean* reporter you had to earn. They were also, I think, expert at a kind of subtle and not so subtle intimidation; of trying to take a reporter who was obviously different and make him bend to their culture, breaking in the process some of his self-respect when he dealt with them. There were no set rules to this, but it was an ongoing unspoken contest of wills, taking place always on their territory — at police headquarters, or on

location where there had been some kind of shooting, and where the reporter was isolated in a world that belonged to the cops. The contest of wills was, it always seemed to me, about something apparently superficial: the use of the word "nigger," for example. It was very much in their vocabulary, used as easily and readily in those days as any bit of minor profanity. They knew very well that the new young reporters on *The Tennessean* did not use the word, that it was in some way abhorrent to us, and they were testing whether we could be bent. The word was a kind of bait; use it, and you could be like them, and perhaps they might give you some help on a story.

It is possible that I am wrong and they did not see this as a test, but I think I am right and it seemed to me critical to stand back from that temptation, not to jump at so easy a shot at being one of the boys, which I was never going to be anyway, but rather to hold on to that part of myself that was different, and to make the point that I was going to do my job, outwork anyone else if necessary, and that I would neither be pushed around nor bent. Everything with the cops, I came to learn (and it served me well later in Vietnam), was about presence and holding on to territory, about being true to yourself and gaining the respect of people who did not necessarily like you but might one day respect you. Knowing when and how to make a stand on integrity was, I think, an intuitive thing: a belief that your own personal integrity lay not merely in your byline but in your behavior as a reporter on location, and that you had to be one complete person, not a divided one of flexible values and vocabularies. In the most elemental way imaginable it was a lesson that you did not seek popularity on the job.

I came in time to overcome my squeamishness, and to love the police beat (disguised on the assignment sheet as the court beat during the daytime so that the regular police reporter would not think

the younger reporters were poaching on his territory). It was, I think, the best job on the paper, and the place where you could learn the most about human nature. It took you to the raw edge of the city; here were the people whose emotions were out of control, and who did not have the buffer of money to protect them from, in many cases, those whom they had once loved but had now come to hate.

Covering the police beat helped tune an important part of my professional makeup, which was the ability to look at people when I talked to them and tell who was telling the truth and who was not. Years later as the pace of journalism picked up and the hiring practices improved and young men and women went directly from college papers like the *Crimson* to the country's top papers and magazines, I thought they missed a vital part of their own education — and in developing their own value system — in not covering police on a paper the size of *The Tennessean*.

I stayed there four years, much longer than I intended to. Although I had always wanted to go on to a paper like the *Times* or the *Tribune*, when in the summer of 1960 an offer came from Scotty Reston of the *Times* I was oddly ambivalent. Gene Wyatt, who was our Sunday editor, had a sense of my mixed emotions, that I had come to love the paper and the region so much that it seemed for the moment like a hard choice, and he told me wisely that my ambivalence was an extremely temporary phenomenon, that in fact it was the perfect time to go, for one should always go out on a high, and that in a year I would be very frustrated if I stayed. "You've learned all that you can here," he said.

It was a wonderful time in my life. I learned some of the things I intended to learn and a great many more that I never intended to learn as a bonus. What I learned, I think, beyond the technical journalistic skills of how to work a story, came from the exceptional humanity of the paper, and was far more important. ♦

# When Checkbook Journalism Does God's Work

by Louise Mengelkoch



*Sally Jessy Raphael was the first of several tabloid TV programs that offered the Lorys of Bemidji, Minnesota, a chance to tell the nation about their daughter's rape.*

**I**t seems that at least once a day I read something in the popular press about the shameful nature of the tabloids and, especially, tabloid television. "Checkbook journalism" has become the buzzword for the unsavory practice of paying Michael Jackson's personal servants, or Bill Clinton's bodyguards, or the store clerk who sold O.J. Simpson a knife to tell all, whether it's true or not.

Money taints the truth, we reason. And the stories themselves appeal to the lowest common denominator in terms of subject matter, audience, and focus. Having said that, I'd like to tell about a strange tabloid story in which I became involved.

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# As gatekeeper, Tabloid TV is lousy, and that's fortunate for those who need it most

I've spent the last year immersing myself in reporting on a rape and murder story. During that year, I've changed my thinking drastically about the value of sensationalism and checkbook journalism. Specifically, I now think we, as journalists, and the public would be better served by re-educating ourselves about what the television tabloids are good for, and why.

In August 1993, fourteen-year-old Heather Lory was gang-raped in the wee hours of the morning by three boys, two of them brothers, in a country cemetery near my home in rural northern Minnesota. Later that morning her parents, Richard and Linda Lory, drove to the boys' home to confront them and their family. Richard Lory ended up shooting seventeen-year-old Bruce Bradach Jr., one of the three boys, to death, seriously wounding Bruce Bradach Sr., and accidentally shooting his own wife in the stomach.

I read the account of the incident in our local newspaper, *The Pioneer* of Bemidji, which was based entirely on official sources: the police report, the complaint, the county attorney. It was obviously superficial and incomplete, and that was because of circumstances at the 9,000-circulation daily that I was well aware of; many of my students go on to work there. This is a newspaper that requires its reporters to write an average of seven stories a day (of varying length) and pays reporters little more than minimum wage.

A week later, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* featured a front-page article on the case, even though we're a long 250 miles northwest of the Twin Cities. This

time, the story was based on official sources plus eyewitness accounts by unofficial sources. But more confusion was created by a different kind of resource-allocation problem. The big-city reporter's time was too valuable to spend more than a day or so in the woods of Nowhere, Minnesota. So he interviewed the people who were willing and available: the Bradach family, friends of theirs, a woman who worked with Rich Lory's wife, Linda, and Rich Lory's former employer. Linda Lory was recovering from surgery and was too ill to speak, and the reporter was told by jail administrators that Lory would not grant an interview. What the reporter didn't know was that the county attorney had instructed everyone involved to stay away from the media, and Lory was not even told about the reporter. The Bradachs ignored the instructions and, as a result, were at least able to speak their piece. The Lorys felt they'd been had, especially when the county attorney himself was quoted at length.

**A**mong his off-the-cuff remarks was the assertion that Bruce Bradach Jr., the young man killed, had nothing to do with the rape. (He apparently based that statement solely on the Bradach family's story. Much later, DNA testing strongly suggested otherwise; final DNA testing was never done.) After the article appeared, Heather Lory was called a liar, a slut, and a murderer more times than she could count. She was spit upon at football games, received death threats, sometimes on her assignment notebooks. She finally dropped out of school.

For the people in our community, the *St. Paul* paper's article solidified a few basic "facts" around which everything

else now had to fit. When I read it, I was puzzled and intrigued enough to contact the Lorys and ask for an interview. I wanted to hear their side of the story, I said, and perhaps write a commentary for a Twin Cities paper.

They grabbed onto my offer with more hope than I was comfortable with. The Lorys later said they had gone to the Bemidji paper to tell their side, but were rebuffed. The reasons given were the negative effects of pretrial publicity and the need to "protect" Heather's privacy. The Lorys even approached the campus newspaper of the state university at which I teach. The family reasoned, quite rightly I thought, that the story was relevant to our campus because Rich Lory had just graduated summa cum laude that spring with a degree in elementary education, to add to his degree in psychology from some years ago. The *Northern Student* editors didn't know quite how to handle the situation and gave the Lorys mixed messages about their willingness to print their story.

My position was clear — I thought. I would hear their side, interview the Bradach family, and write a short opinion piece decrying twin evils: the timidity of the small-town, corporate-owned press — in this case, the owner was Park Newspapers of Ithaca, New York — in the face of controversy, and the big-city's bumbling parachute journalism. I'd shake hands with all involved and go back to my classroom. It wasn't quite that simple.

The Bradach family had now decided to heed the advice of the county attorney and gave me only one brief, unsatisfying interview. The official sources now mysteriously took the high road and wouldn't discuss either the rape or the killing. The Lory family wanted to talk but were being consumed by several imminent disasters: Linda and the four children were, day by day, fast losing their hold on economic sufficiency. She had lost her job, her car had been repossessed, Rich's phone calls from the jail were costing an average of \$150 a month, and the Minnesota fall was fast turning to winter with no money for fuel oil.

Rich Lory was warm and well-fed,





**Richard Lory, above, was jailed and tried for killing one of the boys who attacked his daughter Heather, right.**



but lived in a bleak prison of ignorance about his own case, which, he said, was worse than the actual jail. He had a court-appointed lawyer with whom he'd met only once. The public defender's message was simple — be prepared to spend a long, long time in prison because your case seems pretty open and shut and I'm busy. See you in six months or so. We'll get together about a week before your trial begins. (Lory was also led to believe that pretrial publicity could be damaging to his case and could even cause a change of venue.)

Watching all this go on with my reporter's notebook in hand, I was reminded of photographers documenting acts of violence or horror they could stop if they'd put down the camera. I couldn't stand it. And yet, at the same time, I was beginning to see a larger, long-term story here that I wanted for myself. I worried that if I published part of the story now, I would cut off future sources in opposing camps. When I expressed this concern to my husband, who is also a writer, he agreed, and said he would write a commentary himself.

He entitled it "Is Justice Blind? Or is it Deaf and Dumb in Rural Minnesota?" *The Star Tribune* in Minneapolis wasn't interested, but the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* took notice. They didn't print it, but the editorial page editor called us. We explained the situation, and he passed my husband's piece to the reporter who'd written the original front-page story, who then called us. He said he knew he should have pushed harder to get a wider variety of sources and wondered if we thought the Lorys would agree to be interviewed at this late date. I said it was probably worth a try. He came up.

When Linda Lory asked my advice about granting the interview, I cast aside all pretense of being the disinterested chronicler of events. I warned her that it wouldn't be their story as told through the reporter. It would be his story, and they would undoubtedly be very unhappy with some aspects of it. Furthermore, they would have no way of correcting any new misperceptions the new article caused. The Lorys decided that any publicity that might

help find an acceptable lawyer for Rich and clear Heather's name in the community was worth the risk.

**T**he reporter came up and spent several days doing long interviews with the Lorys and re-interviewing the Bradachs and official sources after reading hundreds of pages of transcripts at night in his motel room. He wrote a thoughtful article, focusing on Heather's ordeal, but also mentioning the problems faced by Rich Lory. The Lorys did dislike aspects of the story. But they tried to focus on the long-term good it could do. They were hoping for a break.

It came soon after the story ran in late November. A producer for the *Sally Jessy Raphael* show was visiting her family in St. Paul for Thanksgiving and saw the article. The Twin Cities local television news reporters called. Linda Lory was excited but fearful and uncertain. Rich Lory was impatient and suspicious. Dealing with reporters so intense they wanted to land helicopters on the Lorys' front yard or producers so insensitive they didn't realize the Lorys couldn't afford a long-distance phone call proved to be too much for the family. So my husband and I ended up brokering with the TV producers and reporters for the Lorys.

The *Sally Jessy* show came first, in early December. We negotiated for some extras, beyond all travel expenses, for the Lorys: paid child care for the younger children while Linda and Heather traveled to New York; expenses for the student reporter who had ultimately written the Lorys' story for the campus newspaper; partial expenses for me, and a guarantee that the Bradach family would not appear on the stage with them.

There were some annoying problems. We felt patronized and pressured during the entire experience. Heather was in tears over the inappropriate clothes — too grown-up, too sophisticated — the producers tried to make her wear on stage. Linda Lory was told just to pay her expenses for later reimbursement when she was so broke she couldn't have afford-

ed up-front money to tip the limo driver.

But the show, broadcast in January, was an unqualified success for the Lory family. They had an hour of air time to tell their story to more than six million viewers. Until then they'd assumed that somehow they were responsible for the system's not working, for Heather's harassment, for Rich Lory's frustration. But the professionals who appeared with them on the show and those in the audience reassured them. And the TV appearance gave them a sense of authority in our own community and legitimized their concerns and complaints. Now it was up to the local power structure to respond.

The powers that be were furious. In a front-page story in the local paper, the county attorney vilified the family for their decision to appear on national television and congratulated himself and the Bradach family for taking the high road and refusing to appear. All in all, the town was in an uproar.

After that, things happened fast. *Hard Copy* and *American Journal* wanted the story. We went with *Hard Copy*, the one willing to pay the family \$3,000, what the Lorys felt they needed as start-up money to get a lawyer for Rich. That \$3,000, and the videotapes of TV appearances, did result — by March, one month before the scheduled murder trial — in a lawyer who agreed to work for expenses only. The lawyer gave the family renewed purpose.

At his trial, Rich Lory was found not guilty of first-degree assault on Bruce Bradach Sr. and not guilty of second-degree murder. He was found guilty of felony murder, a lesser charge in Minnesota. But before sentencing, improprieties in the jury's deliberations were discovered, and a new trial was ordered. The case has been highly scrutinized locally and statewide ever since the national media paid attention.

After the trial, the Lory family, the Bradach family and the defense attorney all appeared together on the Phil Donahue show to tell their stories, the Bradachs by remote hookup from their home, Rich Lory by phone from jail. I was invited to come to offer my observations as well. The entire Donahue

organization displayed nothing but the highest degree of professionalism in all our dealings with them. All involved came away feeling they'd had their say. Expenses were paid fully and promptly.

The reporter and producers of *Hard Copy*, as well, were extremely professional in their demeanor and in their editing. They took their time, asked probing and sensitive questions, and followed through on their promises.

The publicity has now died down. One of the Bradach boys, sixteen, and a thirteen-year-old whose mother has since married Bruce Bradach Sr. pleaded guilty to sexual misconduct and were sentenced as youthful offenders to probation and counseling. Rich Lory awaits his new trial, and his wife and children are trying to piece their lives together. But the impact on those lives from their willingness to "sink" to the level of tabloid journalism has been nothing but positive.

**L**inda Lory has been transformed from a woman too timid to speak to a news reporter to one who was able to put herself on the agenda of a county board meeting and make a public speech about her appearance on national television. Heather Lory has apparently found some healing in public discussion of her case and in support from other women and girls. She has said she hopes that other young women will gain the courage to confront their rapists and trade shame for openness. Rich Lory found a lawyer he probably never would have found otherwise and now faces a maximum of eight to twelve years instead of the forty years the public defender predicted. All three Lorys get phone calls and letters of support. People comment on how grateful they are for the opportunity to try to understand how this happened and prevent it from occurring again.

Another benefit of the tabloid exposure that went beyond the Lory family was the light it shone on local public officials. This normally doesn't happen here. It became apparent as the case progressed that some irregularities had taken place and that such things were considered business as usual. Certain people and offices were so unused to

public scrutiny that they trapped themselves over and over by forgetting how things should be done. The Lory trial got gavel-to-gavel coverage from the Minneapolis newspaper and a 2,000-word front-page story when it ended.

There is still the question of that \$3,000 payment from *Hard Copy*. I understand all the arguments against checkbook journalism. It's hard not to see the potential abuse and the bizarre extremes to which potential sources will go. But for the powerless in our culture who knowingly open themselves up to very personal stories that should be told — that have a real message for the public — it seems only fair that they should be compensated for their willingness to go public. My only complaint is that the Lorys didn't get more.

This experience has educated me in another way too: I use it in my teaching. I bring into class all the normally private people in our county I can find who've been in the news: the young mother whose ex-husband has been charged with abducting their three-year-old daughter; the woman whose grandson accidentally shot and killed his brother; the student in our class who was shot in her backyard while having a barbecue. We discuss the attention they've gotten, talk about how people like them should handle the media and what they can hope to accomplish from the attention. We talk about how to choose someone to handle the media for you or how to approach a friend who you can see is having trouble handling the media and offer to help. And, yes, we talk about the tabloids and whether negotiating with them would be a wise option in each case.

The tabloids' greatest virtue, I tell my students, is exactly that which makes people sneer at them — they're often foolish and not very selective. As gatekeepers they're lousy, and that's often fortunate for those who need them most. They will listen to your story when nobody else will, if it has the elements and the angles they're looking for. If we truly believe in access, that journalists should be dedicated to comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable, the tabloids must be recognized as sharing that mission. ♦

# OJ

## And the Black Media

Neither a Typical Hero nor a Typical Victim,  
He Challenges Typical Coverage

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by E.R. Shipp

*This was more than the coverage of a breaking story. This was the breaking of another black man. — Barnett Wright, managing editor of The Philadelphia Tribune*

*I'm tired of people running around obsessed with O.J. Simpson. I don't give three damns about O.J. Simpson because when did he become the great black cause? — George Curry, editor in chief of Emerge magazine*

Since the founding of the first black newspaper in this country in 1827, black publishers and editors — and, more recently, their broadcasting counterparts — have been absolutely certain of their mission: to plead the cause of black people because the mainstream press either ignored them or maligned them. Blacks depicted in the pages of black newspapers are still generally either heroes whose career advances, civic achievement, or fame are hailed as strides for the entire race, or victims of an unjust America.

And then came the O.J. Simpson case, challenging the old

assumptions, for Simpson is neither a typical black hero nor a typical black victim.

In the week after his arrest last June, three papers among the more than 200 currently published illustrated an extraordinary range of reaction. The *Los Angeles Sentinel*, a weekly that has provided the most varied and comprehensive coverage of the case within the black press, offered a lead story under this straightforward headline: DUAL MURDER CHARGES AGAINST SIMPSON MOVE TO COURTROOM. The *Philadelphia Tribune's* front page banner blared: THE ASSASSINATION OF O.J. SIMPSON: HIGH-TECH BOUNTY HUNTERS SCORE — AGAIN. Meanwhile, *The Michigan Chronicle*, the Detroit weekly widely regarded as one of the best in the country, pointedly ignored O.J.

Opinion polls revealed overwhelming sympathy for Simpson among blacks in the days immediately after his dramatic arrest last June, and anyone familiar with African-American history would understand that reaction. Simpson is a Hall of Fame football star, a network sports commentator, a celebrity pitchman — a man whose life, in the words of one *Sentinel* writer, "had been a signpost for success with grace." And for many he was, above all else, a black man suspected in the murder of a former wife who was, as *Hard Copy* put it,

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"blonde, built, and tanned."

Despite the broad sympathy, blacks differed widely about O.J. In print, on talk shows on black-owned radio stations like WLIB in New York and on a pretrial call-in show on Black Entertainment Television (BET), he has been depicted as everything from "a cultural icon" to a "high-class Uncle Tom."

The debate has tapped insecurities among even the most seemingly successful black Americans. If Simpson, a "model" black American, is found guilty, said Harry Edwards, the sports sociologist, in the BET special in September, "It could get to the place that whites begin to question their ability to judge black people, and that could reverberate every place from the executive suite, where people are being moved up in corporations, to college admissions, whatever."

**D**uring the pretrial stages of the case, much of the mainstream media concentrated on the sensational day-to-day legal developments, helped along by an extraordinary volume of leaks from both prosecution and defense — leaks most black news outlets generally didn't get. But the black media focused specifically on five questions of paramount concern to their audience: Is Simpson worthy of blacks' sympathy given his lack of involvement with anything black since his football-playing days ended? Was he singled out for prosecution because of his preference for white women and because the murder victims were white? Have the mainstream media replaced the old lynch mob in destroying a black man perceived to have violated racial taboos? Is he the latest victim of a racist society's conspiracy to destroy black men? Can any black man, even one as wealthy as O.J., get a fair trial?

Noticeably absent from much of the debate has been the consideration that Simpson might be guilty. According to Raymond H. Boone, editor and publisher of the *Richmond Free Press*, that, too, is in the tradition of the black press. "In most instances, black newspapers, in the quest of bringing balance, have emphasized the positiveness in a lot of black celebrities and black people in general." Achieving that balance might not turn up an unvarnished hero, but it just might expose injustice in the making.

Another tradition persists as well: the formula of rewriting and reacting to news from the mainstream press, liberally using press releases from politicians and civic associations, offering gossip and society news and page after page of church news, and giving the publisher and his friends a platform for trying to influence black opinion.

Some editors and publishers, like Boone of the *Free Press* or George Curry of *Emerge* magazine, the national newsmagazine based in Arlington, Virginia, find shortcomings in the old formulas. "The challenge is, how do you do something courageous? How are you going to do something different? How are you going to do something timely?" Curry said during a panel discussion at last summer's Unity '94 convention of four major journalism associations representing people of color.

Even considering their limited financial resources, most of the newspapers are poorly reported, poorly written, and poorly edited. While publishing information about events in local

black communities, the papers, according to A. Peter Bailey, a journalist and lifelong student of the black press, fail to provide comprehensive coverage of major events or issues of importance to their readers. Except for editorials, they don't really cover such matters as political campaigns, education, the environment, the Supreme Court, international affairs, or even black-on-black crime. And rare is the newspaper that reports on wrongdoing by black government officials or prominent figures such as doctors suspected of Medicaid fraud. Long gone are muckrakers like Ida B. Wells-Barnett and crusading editors like the *Boston Guardian's* William Monroe Trotter and the *Chicago Defender's* Robert S. Abbott — journalists who helped usher in a golden era of black journalism that lasted from the 1880s through the 1930s.

Says Boone, "If you go back thirty years ago, the quality of black papers was superior to most of those today." The main problem, as he sees it, has been "a brain drain," as talented blacks are recruited by the mainstream media or take advantage of opportunities that have opened up in politics or business. Charles Tisdale of the Jackson, Mississippi, *Advocate*, at the unity conference, said: "Black journalism is in very, very serious trouble, and unless we restore integrity to the black press, we're out of business."

Now the Simpson case, for everything else that it may come to stand for, is challenging the black media to rethink their old method of charting racial progress and to develop more creative and enterprising ways of putting out must-read products.

The question of just how to view Simpson the man has dominated much of the black media's coverage — in editorials, letters to editors, and calls from viewers and listeners.

"He does not stir the kind of heart feelings that a Magic Johnson or a Michael Jordan or someone of that kind of hero stature might," observes Dorothy Gilliam, a *Washington Post* columnist and president of the National Association of Black Journalists. "Yet there is still a sense that, despite all his wealth and protection and image and handlers, he is still subject to the same kind of maltreatment experienced by any other African-American."

While many whites may have seen O.J. as a celebrity who transcended race, many blacks saw a black man who had "gone white." Under the headline *EVEN THE FORD BRONCO WAS WHITE*, Ed Davis, the managing editor of the *New Pittsburgh Courier*, wrote in July: "I'm just hard-pressed to figure out what I've heard in all the years of following O.J. Simpson that indicates a concern for *our kind* . . . I firmly believe that to whom much is given, much is expected, and O.J. Simpson has not ante-upped on his obligation to black America."

But when *Newsweek* attempted to tackle the issue of Simpson's racial identity last August with its special report, "The Double Life of O.J. Simpson," some blacks were offended that a "white" news magazine would posit a right way and a wrong way to be black. Good diction, a love for golf, and a driving ambition to rise above one's impoverished beginnings were held up as examples of Simpson's attempt to be "white."

Not everyone was critical. "It was accurate and it dealt with a subject we don't like to talk about," said Dennis Schatzman, the lead reporter on the Simpson story for the *Sentinel*.

The rejection of O.J. for his seeming rejection of a "black" life-style was a major factor in George Curry's decision to



forego a major story about Simpson in the September issue of *Emerge*, the first one published after Simpson's arrest.

"We're not talking about somebody who was the great black hope," Curry explains. "In fact he's gone out of his way to declare himself race neutral. O.J. isn't important. What is important is the issue of domestic violence." *Emerge* therefore carried a groundbreaking seven-page article, "The Brutal Truth — Putting Domestic Violence on the Black Agenda."

But even editors and publishers who were critical of Simpson's life-style could not ignore the broad sympathy for him among black people. So while Andrew W. Cooper, publisher and editor in chief of the New York City-based *City Sun*, personally views Simpson as "a sleaze," the paper's coverage has not reflected that. "Black folks are sympathetic to any black folks caught in the criminal justice system because it is a racist system," he says. And indeed a profound sense of loss has characterized much of the black reaction to the case.

Mark Riley, the programming director at WLIB radio in New York City, likens the affinity for O.J. to the impulse that made blacks crowd around radios to follow every punch in a Joe Louis boxing match or that led many blacks to become diehard Brooklyn Dodger fans after Jackie Robinson broke the baseball color barrier. "People react based on that gut-level feeling that in some way, shape, or form they represent us," Riley says.

From the outset, many blacks saw the O.J. story with a vision shaped by a collective memory of what happens to black men who step out of bounds. And many not only condemned O.J. for his preference in mates, but went further: they blamed Nicole Brown Simpson for O.J.'s downfall. Cooper, the *City Sun* publisher, even assigned a correspondent in Los Angeles to look into "what this Brown woman was about."

"No one has concentrated on this blue-eyed blonde as to who she is," he says. "It would explain some aspect of his madness and no one has done that." A *City Sun* article about her was in preparation as *CJR* went to press.

In numerous syndicated columns, including those of Earl Ofari Hutchinson, the author of the book *The Assassination of the Black Male Image*, Simpson has been depicted as Othello, Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas, William Faulkner's Joe Christmas, and, above all, Emmett Till, the fourteen-year-old Chicago boy lynched in Money, Mississippi, after he flirted with a white woman in the summer of 1955.

*The Chicago Crusader*, in a typical editorial, said Simpson was in trouble simply because "white men have a deep abiding fear that black men will take their women from them." In man-and-woman-on-the-street features in Pittsburgh and Miami, blacks spoke candidly. Said one woman: "We wouldn't have all this coverage if his wife had been black and not white."

For the most part, that view has gone unchallenged. Leslie Streeter, a *Miami Times* reporter and columnist, has been a notable exception. "It is good for us to be protective of our heroes, our stars, because who else will?" she wrote in one column. "But that doesn't condone this coldness, this need that we have to now dig up as much dirt on Nicole Simpson as we can."

Those who articulate a racial explanation for Simpson's predicament expect that a "lynching" must follow — not by

mobs with baying hounds but most assuredly by mainstream newspapers and network television. Many blacks suspect that Simpson's race alone accounts for the saturation coverage of his case. Jim Cleaver, writing in the *Sentinel*, declared: "We are taking on all of the attributes of a crazed lynch mob, screaming for the blood of O.J. Simpson."

Within hours of the killings, many blacks were convinced that the police and the mainstream media were working in tandem to bring Simpson down. It began with a detective's decision to handcuff a forlorn Simpson shortly after he returned to Los Angeles from Chicago.

Robert W. Bogle, president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, which includes 205 papers, was still raging about that episode months later. "Can you imagine somebody being asked to come down to be questioned, yet they handcuffed him? Do you think they would have handcuffed Frank Sinatra?"

**A**s far as many blacks are concerned, the extensive coverage has been evidence of a conspiracy to undermine not just blacks, but black men. Even those who, like Curry, spurn such theories, are bothered that black men "are being used as the poster children for every domestic issue around": sexual harassment (Clarence Thomas), date rape (Mike Tyson), child abuse (Michael Jackson), domestic violence (O.J. Simpson). That white men — from Senator Bob Packwood to Woody Allen — have also been accused of sexual misconduct is irrelevant; with a white man, it is an individual matter, but when a black man is implicated, the entire race may feel impugned.

"I'm not a conspiracy buff," says Curry, "but I do find it extremely curious that they are being accorded far more media coverage than a cannibal like Jeffrey Dahmer. I suspect celebrity has something to do with it, but I think race has something to do with it, too. The white media routinely demonizes the black male."

Robert E. McTyre, the executive editor of *The Michigan Chronicle*, announced in a front page editorial last summer that his paper would not be covering the Simpson case despite calls from inquiring readers.

"Not following the pack does not make *The Michigan Chronicle* noble," McTyre wrote. "Cautious, perhaps. Deliberative, maybe. But we believe American journalism could use more such qualities."

The mainstream media have come in for harsh criticism from their black counterparts, but few editors or publishers are as willing as Boone of the *Free Press* to criticize the black media's obsession with race as the primary issue in the Simpson case. "This race issue is clouding the picture in the O.J. case in a very despicable way," he says. "The principal issue is that this is still a murder case." The way to serve the 13 million people who read black newspapers each week, he said, is to take a "pragmatic" approach.

"The best way to go is to honor what the facts of the matter are," he says, because if one has a point of view, and the facts come out contrary to it, "then you can justifiably be accused of crying wolf and be cast as being very foolish." ♦

# On the Presidency

Lloyd Cutler tells Ken Auletta What's



**K**en Auletta: *What's your greatest frustration with the White House press corps?*

**Lloyd Cutler:** The focus on the president as a source of all news. We have anything but an imperial presidency in this country, and yet, certainly, in all the generations since FDR, we have tended to think of the president as the source of the energy of the government, as the per-

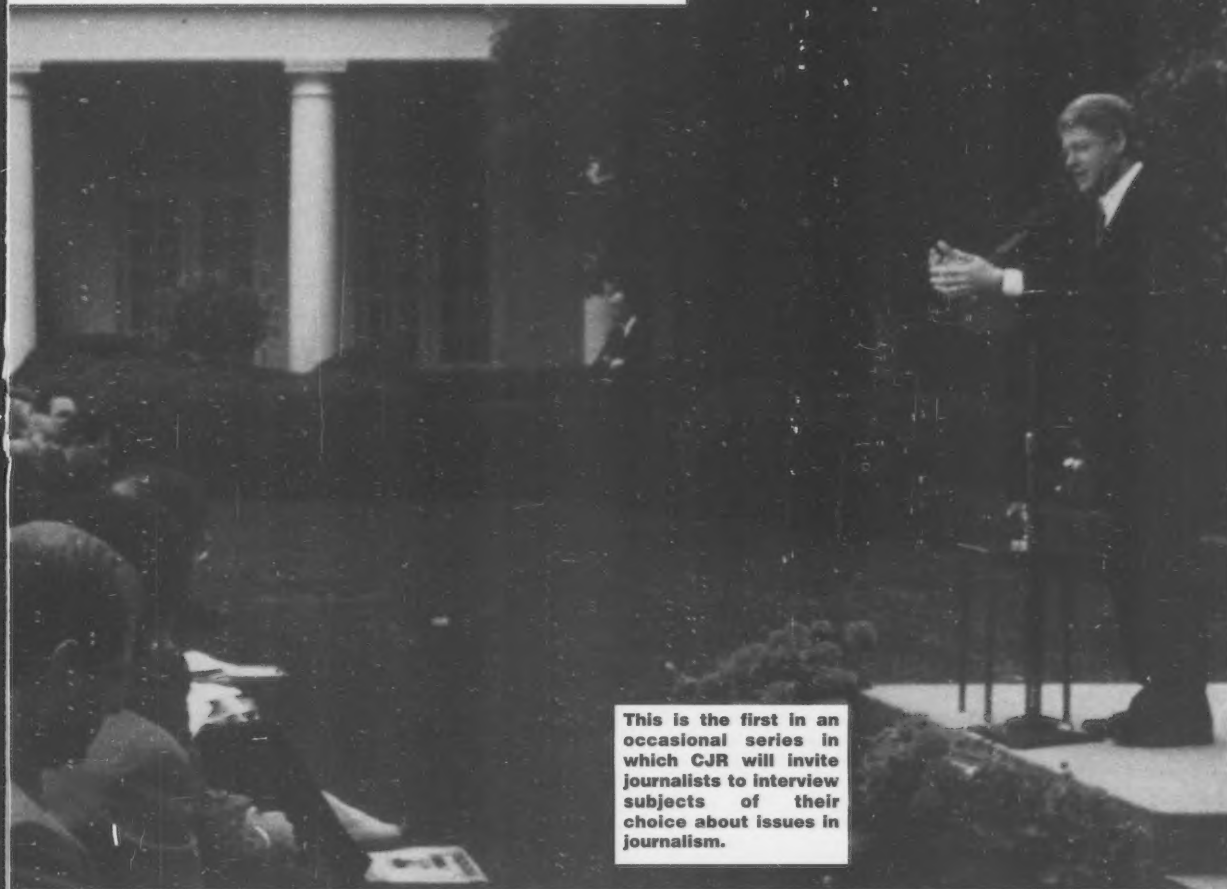
son who makes the government work, or is the reason why things go bad. In fact, we have a constitutional system, structured so that the president can only act with the consent of Congress. I think the press should know enough to explain all this to the public, but they seem to think the president holds the answers, and that it is the president who runs the government.

**KA:** *What's the manifestation of this in terms of press coverage?*

**LC:** The situation is best illustrated by the White House lawn. It looks like a tennis court at Wimbledon on the last day of the tournament. Every network has its own little pitch, a place where its equipment is out all day and night, and no matter where the news is coming from, whether it's Bosnia or whether it's a fire out west, it comes from the White House portico. And, ever since television came along, the news now has immutable deadlines, so that you must

# and the Press

Wrong With White House Coverage



This is the first in an occasional series in which CJR will invite journalists to interview subjects of their choice about issues in journalism.

have your reaction out in the main press, the White House press, the television press, by four thirty or five o'clock. You live by that timetable.

**KA:** Explain how this affects the White House.

**LC:** At Leon Panetta's staff meetings, the first thing that happens is, you go through the president's schedule for the day. And then you go through the various issues . . . on health care, Cuba, the crime bill, Whitewater, whatever else is

on. And, throughout all of those, there's a common thread of what's going to be reported today. Will this particular event give us a favorable opportunity to do something? Which reporter should we call about it? Should we go ahead with this invitation to appear on this show or that show? Current news — how the president will play that day — is a dominant factor in our minds. Much more so than "Where do we want to be a month from now?"

**KA:** You suggest that the press doesn't appreciate the complexities of governing. Be specific.

**LC:** Well, I think the constant reporting about how the president has changed his position is probably the best example. You can take the president on Haiti, you

*Lloyd N. Cutler departed as White House counsel on September 30, 1994. Ken Auletta is the media and communications columnist for The New Yorker magazine and author of Three Blind Mice: How the TV Networks Lost Their Way.*

can take Bosnia, you can take the health care plan. The president is looked on as somebody who should be taking a firm position. In fact, the president does not have absolute power. He has to live by making deals of one sort or another, unless you have a mandate of enormous size. He shouldn't be criticized for making compromises. You have to. There's no other way for a president to govern.

Reagan was the only eight-year president we have had, out of the last six. I don't know whether we're going to see another. The difference between the public perception of what a president ought to be doing and the reality of what he has to do is tremendous.

**KA:** *If the press is simplistic, does something similar happen at the White House? Do people in the White House slip into an us-versus-them mode?*

**LC:** I noticed again, coming back this time, that they do, and that although I have been counsel to several newspapers and TV networks, and I have lots of journalist friends, it has even happened to me. I notice how quickly this happens. "How could they write that? How could your friends say that about you?"

**KA:** *In what you said earlier, you seemed to be suggesting that some of the attitude of us-versus-them is justified, that there's a legitimate reason to feel angry with the press on the part of those in public life.*

**LC:** We are in a bind, a bind there is no way out of. If you're going to be responsive — and responsive quickly because they're going to write the story for the next morning's paper — you haven't the time to get it exactly right. I mean, you might, but it is very difficult to do. And when you correct something, or if there's some ellipsis in what you say, then you're accused of changing your story.

**KA:** *You also seem to be suggesting that much of the press succumbs to the notion that decisions spring from conspiracies, as opposed to very human behavior — from incomplete information; the gang that couldn't shoot straight; inexperience.*

**LC:** I think there is a conspiratorial view among some of the press, but there are others who are not conspiratorially minded but who think the White House staffers they talk to often make mistakes or pretend to have knowledge

*"The New York Times has convinced itself that Clinton did bad things in Arkansas and should not have been elected."*



when they really don't have it. I can think of one particular reporter who has no particular ax to grind. She is not an investigative reporter. But every now and then, she feels she's not being dealt with fairly by the people she talks to. And when you correct a story the next day, or some different person that she didn't talk to corrects the story the next day, she feels the White House is not doing an accurate job.

**KA:** *You are describing two schools of thought in the press: investigative reporters sometimes ascribe too much intelligence to the people in government, believing they are capable of carrying out a conspiracy. And much of the White House press corps ascribes too little intelligence to the people in government. What about The New York Times?*

**LC:** *The New York Times* is a special case. It has convinced itself that Bill Clinton did bad things in Arkansas and should not have been elected president. I have heard [former executive editor] Max Frankel advance the theory that the *Times* had uncovered the Whitewater story in the spring of '92. And that the Clintons, the Clinton campaign, had come up with some accounting information that, in fact, they had lost money, and put out a set of figures which quieted the story, so that it never became a major election issue. If I understood Max correctly, what he was saying is we were fooled by President Clinton; had we not been fooled, he

wouldn't have been elected, and we've got to make amends.

**KA:** *But if Whitewater is such a trivial event, why is it then that Max Frankel, a man of balanced judgment, why would he make the statement you ascribe to him?*

**LC:** Well, if he really believes that there is something dishonest or unethical about the financial explanation that the Clintons put out, he might feel that goes to the character of the now President Clinton. I suppose this is a perfectly legitimate thing for a journalist to do.

**KA:** *So Whitewater becomes a metaphor for something else?*

**LC:** Whitewater becomes a metaphor for the president.

**KA:** *But are you saying that, since it's trivial, it's not . . .*

**LC:** What I'm saying is that while there may be some small collateral, civil cases, which the independent counsel might bring against the Clintons, I can't imagine him bringing any kind of criminal charges such as fraud against the president or Mrs. Clinton. I can't imagine more than a minor, non-character-related civil claim, if McDougal, in fact, did use some Madison Guaranty money for the Clinton campaign.

**KA:** *I think one of the things that probably Max Frankel and other journalists might say is that the central question is not one of illegality but of credibility.*

**LC:** Well, in the first place, I think that while the accounting reports were done very hastily, and they were imperfect, they were essentially correct in that the disputable items affect only the size of the actual loss. But compare this with how Lyndon Johnson acquired his TV stations, to the California businessmen that helped Ronald Reagan buy his house, to the other businessmen who helped Dwight Eisenhower buy his place up in Gettysburg, to how Joe Kennedy financed the 1960 presidential campaign for his son. Compared to those, which went generally unreported . . . and certainly did not attract major newspaper investigations, this is really trivial.

**KA:** *The Whitewater issue is one of the reasons that you were asked to join the White House staff as counsel. Compared to when you served in a similar capacity with President Carter, did you find*



*this time that you spent a surprising amount of time being a p.r. counselor and not just a legal counselor?*

**LC:** I spend much more time being what I call an ethics adviser and investigator than I ever did with Carter. I did have the Billy Carter matter, which involved a Justice Department criminal investigation, and the unfounded drug charge against Hamilton Jordan. But most of my efforts went into the taking of our hostages in Iran, the invasion of Afghanistan, and all of the legal ramifications of those matters. This time, it's much more on Whitewater and other ethical matters.

**KA:** *You talked about how things become metaphors. One of the things that the press has come to believe is that character is central, and is the key that opens the kingdom to an understanding of, let's say, a president. Do you believe that character is, A, central, and, B, are we going at it the right way?*

**LC:** Well, I certainly think character is relevant. Given the morbid, passionate avidity of political opposition, determined to destroy a presidency, you have to weigh the character of the claimant, the person who wants to put forward this story, his or her motives, who finances and arranges the news conferences, because once you circulate that story, you have done irretrievable damage, which the president cannot, as a practical matter, offset.

**KA:** *Say you are a reporter and someone comes along and makes the accusation that Bill Clinton, before he was president, behaved in a way that, metaphorically, represents an attitude toward women that many women would find it important to know. What do you do with this story?*

**LC:** Paula Jones is a difficult case. Part of the story is the possibility that she is inventing it. Whether you report the prurient details, purely gratuitously, to attract attention . . . you've got to be careful about all of that. Once she has filed suit, I suppose you can report she filed suit.

**KA:** *Suppose the editor of a national newspaper sends out a team of reporters to investigate Paula Jones, investigate her motives, investigate whether this really happened. If they can demonstrate that it really did happen, what she*

*claimed, is it a legitimate story, and not a salacious one?*

**LC:** Well, it's both. It may also sell papers. But I do think that the claimant's capacity to achieve instant notoriety, instant circulation of the charges, is something you have to weigh carefully. Since most of these are one-on-one situations, they are charges that anybody can make, and no one can positively disprove. Let us go back to Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan's life as a Hollywood star, among all the ambitious starlets. I would wager there are half a dozen, a dozen, things in Reagan's past that would be every bit as salacious as this. He loved this kind of gossip himself.

**KA:** *And they're unimportant to know?*

**LC:** No one came forward. If somebody had come forward, I don't know. I would not consider it relevant to his presidency.

**KA:** *You say character is relevant. How do we gauge it? Obviously, you're saying we often look in the wrong place.*

**LC:** We tend to over-rate whether a president is telling you the truth. If you look back over our great presidents, very few were models of character in the sense of "I never lie." It is hard to think of a great president of whom that is true. Maybe Woodrow Wilson, but even he was accused of deception. He promised we would not get into World War I.

**KA:** *When you look back at Carter and the relationship he had with the press—which was certainly contentious—do you find that the Clintons' relations with the press are more or less contentious?*

**LC:** Well, I would say that Clinton makes a bigger effort with the press. He's just gotten angry at the press, as Carter occasionally got angry at the press. But I suppose both, in the end, were unsuccessful with the press, and Carter was judged, also, as weak and vacillating.

**KA:** *If Bill Clinton could start over today, what would your advice be about how he should handle things?*

**LC:** Well, it would be to first get Leon Panetta to be your chief of staff.

**KA:** *And in dealing with the press?*

**LC:** What Leon does that makes a crucial difference is he makes decisions and takes positions, and then he's available to go out and explain it articulately to the press. One could argue that a more experienced press team, one that came

from the ranks of the journalists, and that the journalists trusted, should be brought in to replace the Clinton press team. Though you can never really know whether the journalists would trust one of their own. But I think the best answer is to have an effective, visible spokesman who is also a major policy player.

**KA:** *If you had the ear of every White House reporter, what would you counsel them as to how they could do a better job?*

**LC:** I think I would counsel them to do a better job of reporting to the public the constitutional and real-world political roles of Congress and the president, and the difficulties they must deal with in our system of checks and balances and loosely organized political parties. That may not sell papers, it may not get the reader past the first two paragraphs of the story, but it is critically important. I really don't think the public realizes, for example, that the impasse on the crime bill was essentially part of the checks and balances between the president and Congress, and the current political climate of incumbents controlling their own money.

**KA:** *And if you were counsel to the public, and you had the ear of the citizenry of this country, and one citizen stood up and asked you, Mr. Cutler, you have observed the behavior of the press. How would you describe, anthropologically, the values of this tribal culture?*

**LC:** I would say that the press feels that it's performing a very important function about the way our public officials operate, but that it does so in a very cynical manner. It is much more inclined to place blame, or to write stories that apply blame, than it is to give credit. And it seems to believe that these wonderful institutions of ours can be run only by perfect people, who are nowhere to be found. If you concentrate on exposing the errors and weaknesses of everybody in government, there is no one left to run the government.

Right now there's no shortage of people who are willing to enter public service, and to some degree that will continue to be true. But if we keep this up, it will no longer be true of the people we want most to serve us. The time of the citizen-statesman may be ending. ♦

# Parachuting into Madness

**Big Wars and Small, Famines and Floods, Revolutions and Riots. But Nothing Like This.**

by Jim Wooten

**W**e landed in mid-morning, schlepped our gear across the tarmac, strolled to the airport fence — and watched a little girl die. She was about six years old but so wasted from cholera it was hard to tell. Her mother laid her beside the road, knelt to touch her one last time, then lifted her face and fists to the African sky and screamed.

This was my introduction to a week of reporting on the exodus of nearly a million refugees from the horrors of Rwanda to the hell of Zaire: ten thousand minutes of my life, each soaked in death, all coagulating into a reality that would penetrate every defense I'd ever devised against personal involvement in a story.

My career had taken me into most of the darker crevasses of our times — big wars and small, famines and floods, revolutions and riots, all manner of disaster and destruction all over the world — usually on one of those short-notice, short-term assignments that suddenly land a reporter in the thick of a crisis with little time for reflection. Parachute journalism is honest work but it is neither glorious nor glamorous and it is not neurosurgery. It requires only stamina, a strong stomach, and the knack for putting some distance between the facts and the emotions. Over the years, working so often in this mode, repeatedly confronted with the grotesque ironies of combat or the grievous inequities of nature, I'd learned to do precisely that, to create some psychological work-

space between the truth and how I felt about it.

But I found such detachment impossible during the latter days of July on the volcanic moonscape of northeastern Zaire, where corpses were accumulating faster than mass graves could be carved from the obdurate earth. In the wee hours of that first night, bone-tired but sleepless, I crawled from our tent and watched a huge moon leap straight up out from Rwanda, and saw in silhouette against its ivory light an endless line of refugees still trudging past, shambling along beyond the fence, headed north on the airport road. I listened for some time to the scrape of their bare feet against the macadam, to their coughing and their snuffling and the crying of the children cradled in their arms or swaddled on their backs, and for the first time ever on assignment, I wept.

No distance was possible. And no escape, either; no press room or office or filing center offering respite or retreat; no hotel bar dispensing anesthetic potions. For seven days human beings were constantly falling all around us. In many cases, we and the lenses of our cameras were the very last things they saw in the very last moments of their lives.

It was an excruciating dilemma: at last, a reality so wretched it demanded some degree of personal involvement; and yet a story whose wretchedness was of such epic proportions that any personal involvement was useless. The urge to *do something* was constantly answered by the grim realization that *nothing* would help. Along toward the end of my work there, in a conversation

with Ted Koppel on *Nightline*, I suggested that should history produce such a moment again and our network ask me to cover it, I'd be inclined to refuse the assignment.

"I never thought I'd hear that from you," my wife said when I returned. "Not that I believe it."

But it's true. At least, I *believe* it to be true, and what follows here, drawn from notes scribbled in notebooks still black with the dirt of Zaire, is why.

At dawn one day, at a cholera-infested camp, I walk with Yves, a young refugee working as a volunteer for *Médecins Sans Frontières*, into a mass of several thousand sick Rwandans waiting for treatment. It is difficult to move through them without stepping on a hand or a leg. Yves stops and stoops and touches a pretty young woman, then lifts and carries her slight body over to a pile of at least 500 corpses and deposits her between a baby and an ancient old man. He bends down to smooth the young woman's dress, tucks it modestly beneath her legs, then stands and goes back to work. In less than an hour, Yves will find more than thirty others who did not make it through the night.

Later, as we talk, with the camera rolling, I listen to his recollections of how he escaped from his homeland, of how his brother had died here in this camp, and of how he does not think his aging parents will survive, but as he talks I cannot help but notice over his left shoulder, just a few feet behind him, a young man about his age lying on his side. Our eyes meet for a moment, then his slowly close. He coughs weakly and

*Jim Wooten is the senior correspondent for ABC News.*

dies. Yves finishes his answer and I ask another question.

In decrepit little Goma, just inside Zaire's border with Rwanda, there are corpses at every corner, every intersection, in the narrow spaces that separate the derelict buildings, stacked against their crumbling walls, in between the empty gas pumps at an abandoned service station, under carts filled with rotting produce at the filthy market, lined up side by side in neat rows outside a convenience store, at the edge of the open ditches that serve as sewers, scattered across the central circle in the middle of the city. No matter where I glance, it is impossible *not* to see a body. I finally close my eyes and try to concentrate on something else, anything else: my wife's pleasant face, my favorite photograph of our family, the memory of one of my daughters standing next to a sizable fish she had pulled from the Atlantic. Yet when I open my eyes again the car is moving past a large sign advertising an infant formula, a colorful photograph of plumply beautiful African babies over a slogan, *Tout Va Bien*, All Is Well. At the foot of one of the poles supporting the sign lies a tiny bundle the size of a pillow.

Beyond the town is Lake Kivu, vast and cool, yet contaminated by the refugees' waste and garbage and thousands of bodies, the strange bitter fruit of Rwanda's maniacal spring — dark bodies bleached nearly white by the water and the equatorial sun, bodies dipping and bobbing and rolling face up or face down. A mile away, children frolic in the water, spitting mouthfuls at each other. From the road that runs above the lake the thousands of refugees gathered at its edges look like the Fourth of July crowd at the Jersey shore. Cattle wander through it and into the water, dipping their formidable horns, scattering the laughing children in all directions. Their parents and grandparents wash their tat-

tered clothes and spread them on the rocks to dry. An elderly man unzips and urinates into the edge of the lake. A lovely young woman removes her filthy blouse and washes her breasts with handfuls of water from the lake as thousands of other refugees move down to the edge to fill their plastic jerry-cans and take them back to their families. They don't understand that they are carrying poison, that the water may kill them.

In the afternoon, a large dump truck moves slowly along the airport road as teams of Rwandan men follow behind,

in surgical masks and latex gloves, lifting the bodies and heaving them into the back. Two of the men scale the sides and rearrange the bodies to make room for more. A kilometer on, the truck veers into a banana grove and backs up to a deep trench half the length of a football field and half filled with bodies, a terrifying tableau of arms tangled with legs interwoven with torsos bent at mad angles. A naked baby, missing its blanket, seems to be sleeping comfortably in the crook of an old man's arm. Nearby, a pregnant woman's hands are locked in

rigor mortis atop her swollen stomach. The odor is overwhelming. With a hydraulic whine, the bed of the truck slowly rises and tilts and its cargo goes sliding into the crowded pit.

One evening, scanning my script for the evening broadcast, my producer finds the word *madness* four times. "It's a two-minute piece," he says. "Twice, I'll give you, but . . ."

I have no recollection of having used then reused the same stark term. But there it is: *madness . . . madness . . . madness . . . madness . . .*

It is straight-up noon. We come upon a group of young boys sprawled in the dirt near the airport. They're all orphans and all in bad shape. Two are clearly beyond help. They're both naked, both lying on their backs, one's head resting on the other's legs. They're so frail, so

weak; just barely breathing. I watch Fletcher Johnson, an enormous African-American man, in whose hands a heavy television camera seems a mere toy, shooting this scene with his usual meticulous skill. He lifts his face from his viewfinder and our eyes meet. "This is fucking crazy," he says. From our van we retrieve what little water we have and along with the others in our crew we try to get some of it into the two dying children. I slip my hand beneath one small back and raise him. He is feather light. They both stir and open their mouths like baby birds. Fletcher uses a bottle cap as a glass. It is still too much. They cough and sputter but open their eyes wide and silently plead for more.

It doesn't help.

That night, screening the videotape, I notice that Fletch has erased all shots of the two little boys.

Past the camp where Yves is working, the airport road rises into the mountains. All along it, small children carry enormous bundles on their heads for miles. Women walk for hours carrying heavy water-cans. A teen-ager at the roadside in a Michael Jordan T-shirt raises his hand as we pass, then rubs his stomach. Nearby, a man's body lies halfway on the berm, halfway on the road. He has been run over several times.

In more than thirty years as a reporter, this is like nothing I've seen. Not like the famine in Somalia, not like the flight of the Iraqi Kurds into the snowy mountains of Turkey and Iraq, not like the sieges of Beirut and Sarajevo. It is not *like* anything.

The last afternoon. It's nearly dark and we have schlepped our gear back across the tarmac into a twin-engine King Air chartered for Nairobi. Packed with supplies for our colleagues who are staying, it had arrived without seats. Sprawled on the floor, exhausted, we wait an hour for takeoff clearance. Finally, the plane lifts itself lightly from the runway and banks east toward Tanzania and Kenya, and for a long moment, as the little plane climbs away, we are all silent. There is nothing to say. In varying degrees, as we begin our journey home, each of us is taking along a piece of the madness below. ♦

**The  
lenses of  
our cameras  
were often  
the very last  
things they  
saw in the  
very last  
moments of  
their lives**



**Ah**, the **PRESS PASS**

The license to **THRILL**

Is it a sure-fire **excuse** to **SHOOT**  
a fresh **target**

And ask questions later?  
hey, everyone's fair game

why waste **bullets**

when a few deftly **CHARGED** words  
can **DESTROY** a **CAREER** or a **LIFE**

It's always **open season** in ratings land  
so watch your back and move fast

**CJR**

Columbia Journalism Review. The presses can run but they can't hide.



# Are New Ideas Killing the L.A. Times?

by Charles Rappleye



The Los Angeles Times is trying to remain a great newspaper while implementing a controversial something-for-everyone strategy. "We do a lot of things," says editor Shelby Coffey III. "It's one of the reasons we have a large readership."

T

he news first surfaced a year ago at a committee meeting of the Metropolitan Water District: in its search for a new headquarters building, agency representatives had entered into discussions to buy Times Mirror Square, the massive office complex occupying an entire city block and located kitty-corner from city hall that has served for the last sixty years as home to the *Los Angeles Times* and its parent company since 1973, Times Mirror.

*Charles Rappleye is news editor at the L.A. Weekly.*

Company executives, then and again this spring, have played down the possibility of a move. But they don't rule it out, and some observers see unsettling symbolism in the idea of a sale, as if the paper were toying with abandoning the city it serves.

Such psychic tremors are the last thing the newspaper needs. Otis Chandler, the last in a line of family publishers reaching back to 1882, left the paper's executive offices in 1980, and his hand-picked successor, Tom Johnson, was removed from his post as

publisher in 1989. Since then, the paper has been subject to repeated shifts in management, in staff structure, and in design. Repeated buyouts decimated the staff, especially in the senior editorial ranks, an erosion of talent exacerbated by repeated raids from *The New York Times*, which has lured ten top writers to jump ship in the past two years. Another distressing statistic: of the sixteen reporters whose bylines appeared on the Pulitzer-winning front page covering the second day of the Los Angeles riots in 1992, six have left the paper.

While profit has never been far from the minds of those in charge at the *Los Angeles Times*, under the tenure of Otis Chandler the strategy for success was market dominance through journalistic excellence. Chandler marked his appointment as publisher in 1960 by rejecting the parochial boosterism of his forebears, challenging editor Nick Williams to make the *Times* "the number one newspaper in the country." Twenty years later, having made dramatic strides toward that goal, he selected Johnson, now head of CNN, to succeed him. "Together," Chandler exhorted Johnson in a memo, "we are going to push *The New York Times* off its perch . . . That is your challenge and mine."

**W**hile the paper got a boost in 1989 when Hearst's *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* closed its doors, leaving much of this sprawling city to be served by a single paper, the *Times* was shaken by the industry-wide trends of shifting advertising practices and declining readership. More telling, the flight of retail shoppers and stores to the suburbs gave rise to regional competitors, in the San Fernando Valley and particularly in Orange County, where *The Orange County Register* was courting an affluent, politically conservative readership with extensive use of color, brightly-written features, and aggressive marketing.

Determined not to be left behind, the *Times* in 1989 brought in a new management team, headed by publisher David

Laventhol, renowned as an innovator for conceiving the Style section at *The Washington Post*, and another Style alumnus, editor Shelby Coffey III.

Soon after Laventhol's appointment, he and Coffey introduced a new "faster format" design, one that emphasized shorter stories, fewer jumps inside, more white space and capsule story summaries filling the left-hand column of each inside section. Coffey said recently that public reaction affirmed management's confidence in the move. "Because the place was so research-crazy at the time we were doing faster format, we did these very large, Gallup-sized surveys afterward... that showed that those have been very effective in getting readers' attention."

The addition of color became a priority, and after months of muddy, off-register trial and error, the paper began to produce sharp, quality color photos routinely throughout the paper.

Even more changes were taking place in Orange County, where the *Times* was going up against the flashier *Register*. Los Angeles news was bumped off the front page of the *Times* Orange County edition — and often out of the paper — to be replaced by local stories and features. The local news section was revamped to feature intense community coverage. Stringers and contract writers were hired to churn out the expanded local news.

The increasing influence of the Orange County project was underscored with the elevation of Carol Stogsdill in January 1993 from editor of the Orange County edition to senior editor in charge of all California news. A graduate of the *Chicago Tribune* copy desk, Stogsdill served as night news editor at the *Register* before joining the *Times*. Likewise, Larry Higby, a marketing executive drafted from the corporate suites at Taco Bell, was promoted from president of the Orange County edition to executive vice president in charge of marketing for the entire paper. Higby got his start after college in the Nixon

White House as chief staff assistant to H.R. Haldeman, a career highlight that left many journalists uneasy.

Another inspiration for the Orange County experiment comes from Coffey's enthusiasm for New Directions for News, a nonprofit think tank devoted to "fostering innovation in newspapers." The organization's director, Jean Gaddy Wilson, exhorts newspaper executives to "celebrate, invigorate, reiterate, deliberate, assimilate — rather than assemble." A twenty-six-page NDN handbook offers prototype pages — heavy on teasers, windows, and splashy color, with text a virtual afterthought — interspersed with reams of free-standing factlets: "One half the children born today will spend part of their childhood in single-parent families." And NDN is big on positive news. In "Plus 50s," a prototype devoted to cultivating senior readers, for example, prospective readers are advised, "You don't believe in or live in a world that's all bad news. That is what you get with the 'gotcha!' investigative journalism so popular today. You want a newspaper that celebrates heroes — and everyday people doing ordinary things."

Coffey, a founding member of New Directions for News, has served as its chairman for the past two years. "One of the things we've tried to do," he says of NDN, "is put ideas out there and say here, take them and adapt them . . . It's not a perfect science, but the interest is, we're in a battle for attention. You want to keep saying, how do we get that, how are we more compelling?"

And so Coffey has institutionalized change at the *Times*. Last year the package developed to the south, in Orange County, was transplanted north, to the suburban tracts of the San Fernando Valley. There the *Times* introduced another expanded daily zoned edition, flagged by an internal masthead that announces "Valley" in three-inch, sky-blue letterhead and featuring hyper-local briefs, intensive use of photos, and computer graphics. In still other zoned edi-



engendered backlash among many white reporters — “I’m just glad I got my job before all this came down,” one commented later that year. And since then, minority journalists at the *Times* say they have been disappointed to see little change in the makeup of the paper’s upper management. Several, including some of the more vocal internal critics, have moved on.

Certainly, the racial tensions placed Coffey in a tricky bind; whatever course he chose was likely to alienate significant portions of the newsroom. Neither faction was mollified, and the discord only heightened the frustrations of budget cuts and changing editorial priorities.

Overall, the new *Times* seems more a compilation of publications than parts of a whole, with different sections bearing different size and style logos, different looks, different tones of writing and approach. What gets lost in this multiplication of specialization is the sense of focus on key issues that define the city and the region. As David Freed, an investigative reporter who left the paper in February, commented in a recent interview, “The paper tries to be all things to all people, but in the process it becomes very little to anyone. It has no soul.”

In its routine operations, the *Times* is considered by many a still-great paper — there are fine foreign correspondents like Kim Murphy and William Montalbano, distinguished critics like Richard Eder on books and Howard Rosenberg on TV, a first-rate Sunday magazine — but on the whole, a paper that seems to be losing its direction, losing its savvy.

The continuing changes at the *Times* have taken place against a backdrop of economic recession and declining advertising revenues that staggered Times Mirror newspaper holdings on both coasts. Dubious decisions compounded the problem — in Baltimore,

the company invested \$650 million to buy and renovate the *Sun*, for an annual profit yield of just \$25 million; in New York, the ambitious expansion of *Newsday* has brought sluggish circulation and cumulative losses estimated at more than \$150 million. Corporate management also stumbled in non-newspaper communication acquisitions, buying broadcast and cable TV operations at high market prices, then selling when the market was soft, adding to the revenue demands on the *Los Angeles Times*. In 1992, Times Mirror posted its first annual loss.

Like executives throughout the company, managers at the *Times* made budget cuts. Two rounds of voluntary buyouts yielded overall staff cuts of 23 percent and a surprise in the editorial department: where perhaps a score of additional people were expected to opt for the December 1992 offer, more than 100, nearly 10 percent of the department, signed up. The total was trimmed by a departmental cap, but some of the paper’s top senior reporters departed.

A third buyout, implemented last fall and targeted at writers in the zoned editions, was more selective — individual reporters were called in to meetings with Stogsdill and suburban editor Bill Rood, and informed whether there would be room for them on the editorial staff should they “opt” to stay.

The Metro staff, the top rung of the paper for reporters in California and the heart of its news operation, was especially hard-hit, while both reporting and design staff in the Valley section and other zone editions were expanded.

“The buyout sent a message to those who remained about the paper’s commitment to greatness,” said Doug Frantz, a reporter who passed on the buyouts but left this spring for a position with *The New York Times*. Frantz distinguished himself at the *Los Angeles Times* Washington bureau, where he wrote landmark stories on the Bush

administration’s dealings with Iraq and, later, co-wrote the controversial Troopergate story. “It took twenty years for the paper to build up a great staff, and it took just a few months to dismantle it,” Frantz says.

While the front page of the paper is often self-referential — the content of routine interviews is often reported as, “told The Times,” or, “said in an interview with The Times” — the defining stories that would set the agenda for Los Angeles and the region appear late, or not at all. Stories relating to smog and pollution control are infrequent, and rarely address underlying questions of power and financial interest. The city and county beats produce few scoops, and despite the spectacle of the Rodney King beating and subsequent inquiries, the *Times*’s police reportage has failed to penetrate the paramilitary culture of the LAPD and sheriff’s office.

The feature writing that has long been a hallmark of the *Times* continues to get prominent play, but there, too, the edge is missing. “The signature people who made the place great — the Bella Stumbos, the whole cadre of seasoned reporters who really knew what they were doing — they’re gone,” says one former Metro writer. “There’s a bland sameness to the stories.”

At the same time, lapses at the paper reflect an erosion of journalistic ethos from the years of Otis Chandler and city editor Bill Thomas, revered by his reporters for protecting their independence from constituencies or advertisers with axes to grind. There was a costly decision this spring to reprint a food section with a rewritten headline because advertisers objected to a title that asked: “Unsafe at Any Meal?” And in June, the paper spiked a syndicated column by *Newsday*’s Allan Sloan critical of Times Mirror’s structured deal to sell its cable properties to Cox Cable of Atlanta. Noting that while holders of common Times Mirror stock would see their div-



idents slashed by more than two thirds, the controlling interest held by the Chandler family would retain full dividends, Sloan commented, "I think Times Mirror is trying to address the problems of unhappy Chandler family members who live on their Times Mirror dividends." Business page editor Robert Magnuson says he found some of the story "not accurate. So I killed it." Two other Times Mirror properties, *The Morning Call* in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Sloan's own *Newsday*, ran the column.

Observers outside the *Times* notice a shift in emphasis in the news division. Nieman Foundation chairman Bill Kovach believes the paper continues to do as good a job on foreign reporting as other major dailies, but he says the paper's profile on national stories has slipped: "Under Otis Chandler they made a considerable investment in national reporting, and they had some reporters there that were competitive with anyone in the country." Now, Kovach says, the *Times* generates little attention for its coverage of the nation outside southern California.

"The paper's not as visible as it was ten years ago. There's a sense that if they're going to be identified back east, it will be for another Times Mirror poll."

Closer to home, Ed Guthman, Pulitzer Prize winner and former *Times* national editor, now teaching journalism at the University of Southern California, sees regional and local news as a weakness. "When you look at the coverage in Los Angeles, they just aren't doing a tough, thorough job on a regular basis," he says. "They've lost some great people, a lot of institutional knowledge, and it shows."

David Abel, a senior fellow at the International and Public Affairs Center at Occidental College, publishes two newsletters, one on land use affairs and one on regional infrastructure. "If the *Times* was covering these subjects, I

wouldn't have a market," he observes.

The paper's coverage of Hollywood, certainly the region's most visible industry, has also drawn fire. "The paper's going down — I don't know anyone who doesn't feel the same way," says William Knoedelseder, who left his position as a staff writer for *Calendar*, the paper's entertainment section, to write a book on mob infiltration at MCA. "There's a lack of sharpness, of acuity. The entertainment pages are all product-oriented" — features based on new film and music releases and soft-hued personality profiles. "Days go by when there's nothing of import."

Knoedelseder, now producing a television news program for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, said it was editor Coffey's instinct for caution that took the edge off the entertainment reporting.

working to develop online, CD-ROM, and other services, says the answer is yes. "The role of design is to make things easier to find, easier to read and to locate," he says.

Adds Coffey, "I think if you look at the paper day in and day out, you see a considerable amount of strong reporting, of very good writing." He points to a number of new columns designed to provide more analysis, and the beefed-up Sunday magazine provides a forum "to keep the strong literary tradition of the *Times*."

"We do a lot of things," Coffey says. "It's one of the reasons why we have a large readership."

The question of direction and priorities at the *Los Angeles Times* was brought into sharp focus last April with

## **The *Times* seems more a compilation of publications than parts of a whole, with different sections bearing different looks, different tones of writing**

"Shelby has this thing about bending over backward to be fair. If the information goes 90-10 in one direction, the story should read that way. But the institutional tendency at the *Times* is to go 50-50. If you write the story that way, you're no longer telling the truth."

Such critiques pose a challenge to the top editors at the *Times* and, implicitly, for the newspaper industry as a whole: Can management do both? Can it focus its attention on innovation, on capturing the attention of an image-conscious populace, while at the same time maintaining the paper's traditional roles of watchdog, monitor, and critic? *Times* deputy managing editor Terry Schwadron, who supervises the Art, Photo, and Design departments, and heads a New Media division that is

announcement of management changes in New York. The draft of Gene Roberts as *New York Times* managing editor seemed to be a clear statement about the kind of journalism that paper would practice. A former national writer and editor for the *Times*, Roberts distinguished himself during a seventeen-year stretch as editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, where he fostered committed, hard-nosed journalism that won the paper a string of Pulitzer Prizes.

The decision in New York prompted writers and editors in Los Angeles to look at their own succession scenarios. "The appointment of Gene Roberts is the thing people are talking about when they huddle in the hallways," a Metro staff member said last summer. Managing editor George Cotliar is

approaching retirement age, but the likely candidates to succeed him, those editors favored under Coffey's tenure, are widely regarded as lacking in the field experience that would season news judgment. Four of the editors closest to Coffey — Stogsdill, Schwadron, Calendar editor John Lindsay, and Column One editor Karen Wada, responsible for a daily, front-page news feature — have little reporting or writing experience. All rose through the editing ranks from copy desks.

Coffey defended his appointments in an interview. "I sometimes laugh a little bit at the way in which whatever was the last job a particular person had pigeonholes that person. These are people with a wide range of experience and they understand the broad mission, which is, one, to bring out the best in the people they're working with, and two, to put out the best possible newspaper we can."

## Can management focus its attention on innovation while maintaining the paper's roles of watchdog and critic?

Still, widespread angst over the paper's future has given rise to a remarkable rumor — that Nieman Foundation chairman Kovach, formerly editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*, would be drafted, à la Roberts, to step in and restore some sense of journalistic order in Los Angeles. When the story was reported to him Kovach chuckled bemusedly and said it was the first he'd heard of it. Commented one senior *Times* staff member, "It just shows that people are so depressed with the prospect of having one of these people as managing editor that they're grasping at straws."

A more likely prospect for optimism among *Times* journalists was the appointment of Richard Schlosberg III

as publisher last December. The departure of David Laventhol was forced on the paper — Laventhol was disabled by the advance of Parkinson's disease — but the selection of Schlosberg has come to be regarded as harkening back to the Otis Chandler era.

Formerly publisher of *The Denver Post*, then owned by Times Mirror, and later appointed head of the company's newspaper division, Schlosberg was one of the few Times Mirror executives held over from Tom Johnson's administration. A one-time Air Force pilot, Schlosberg has little hands-on editorial experience, but his frank manner and infectious enthusiasm are seen as refreshing, even exhilarating. "A crocus of spring," one newsman enthused. And Schlosberg's express interest in improving the editorial page is already reflected in a more vigorous, more pointed content.

Another signal of Schlosberg's bent

came at a meeting last March, when Coffey introduced the new publisher at a breakfast meeting in the paper's Washington bureau. During a question-and-answer session, a reporter asked the executives' reaction to the exodus of top writers to *The New York Times*.

Coffey answered first, acknowledging his concern with the loss of talent but emphasizing that there were talented journalists down in the ranks ready for the opportunity to move up.

Schlosberg followed Coffey's response with one of his own. Opinion is divided as to whether the new publisher flatly contradicted his editor, but there is consensus that he phrased his answer in much stronger language. "In my view, when somebody quits, they're firing the

organization, and we need to find out why," he was quoted as saying. (Efforts to interview Schlosberg for this story were unsuccessful.)

**S**peaking to a group of reporters later, Schlosberg reiterated his strong feelings. "This *New York Times* thing really pisses me off," he reportedly said.

In one case, Schlosberg actually succeeded in helping hang onto a prominent reporter. National affairs writer Sara Fritz was being courted by *The New York Times*, but says she rejected the offer after meeting with Coffey and Schlosberg in Los Angeles. "I was persuaded that the future is bright; I wanted to stick around and be a part of that," Fritz says.

Schlosberg's arrival, she adds, has lifted the mood of many at the paper. "People see him as taking the paper a little back toward the Thomas era [editor

Bill Thomas retired in 1989, the year Tom Johnson left]. More plain old journalism, a little more enthusiasm for the news, a little less on packaging."

Some observers remain more guarded in their assessment of Schlosberg and the future of the paper. Known to be a committed cost-cutter, Schlosberg is expected to maintain the new bottom-line approach to editorial management. And since Schlosberg came to the *Times* from Times Mirror, where he supervised all newspaper operations except the *Times*, he seems an unlikely candidate to defend the flagship paper against raids to support red-ink projects back east.

Finally, Schlosberg may not be long for the publisher's office. He is considered a likely candidate to replace Times Mirror chairman Robert Erburu, scheduled to retire next year. "He's going to have to go up or out," one *Times* editor postulated. "What happens then will tell us a lot." ♦

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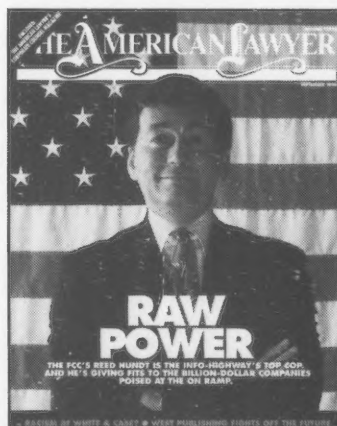
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A boy rides past a burning car in a South African township.  
Carter would rise before dawn and go out looking for images he hoped would help bring down apartheid.

## The Legacy of Kevin Carter

# Eye on Apartheid

Last April, the South African photographer Kevin Carter was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his picture of a well-fed vulture stalking a starving Sudanese girl. In May, he came to New York to receive his award. Two months later, the thirty-three-year-old news photographer



**"I am haunted by the vivid memories of killings &**

Carter (left) was devastated by the death of his closest friend Ken Oosterbroek. "We were like brothers; we grew up together. The Pulitzer is for him."



connected a hose to the exhaust pipe of his red pickup truck and gassed himself to death. Journalists who had buried colleagues killed covering South Africa's turmoil resumed their grim role of pallbearers. Carter himself had barely missed being killed covering incidents in Tokoza township, the township where his best friend and colleague Ken Oosterbroek was later shot dead.

Carter had been documenting the political turmoil in his country since 1983, when he was hired as a photographer by the *Sunday Express*. His first *Time* cover came the next year. Thereafter, he worked for most leading South African newspapers — *The Star*, *The Sunday Tribune*, and the progressive *Rand Daily Mail*, which later became *The Weekly Mail* — and finally Reuters.

The violence seemed to affect Carter more than it did other colleagues who managed to shrug off with joints and jokes what they recorded on film. Returning from particularly upsetting assignments, he would often cry, or try to drink or drug himself into oblivion. Friends grew used to his 3 A.M. phone calls, rambling about suicide. He said that after shooting the Pulitzer-winning picture, he "sat under a tree and cried

**Three right-wingers were shot to death by a policeman during their armed attempt to prop up the autocratic government of the Bophuthatswana homeland.**

**corpses & anger & pain, of trigger-happy madmen..."**



**A looter makes off with goods as unrest sweeps his community. Carter narrowly missed being shot covering the pre-election turmoil.**

**"You are making a visual here. But inside something is screaming, 'My God.' But it is time to work. Deal with the rest later."**

— Carter, as quoted in *Time*

and chain-smoked. I couldn't distance myself from the horror of what I saw."

Carter's private demons were closing in on him when he returned to South Africa from New York. His suicide note said he was "depressed . . . without phone . . . money for rent . . . money for child support . . . money for debts . . . money!!!!!" But he also lived with the demons familiar to all those whose profession makes them witness to horror. "I am haunted by the vivid memories of killings & corpses & anger & pain . . . of starving or wounded children, of trigger-happy madmen."

*Judith Matloff*

*Judith Matloff, a Reuters correspondent based in Johannesburg, was Kevin Carter's housemate, colleague, and friend.*



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# O P E O I N G U L P, O N N L

What Happens When The Public Comes

by Jennifer Wolff

It was a small moment in history. At 6:57 P.M. on Wednesday, June 22, managing editor Jim Gaines of *Time* addressed a group of irate computer users who had been pounding their keyboards in protest because the magazine had darkened a mug shot of O.J. Simpson for the cover of that week's issue, making him look more guilty, more sinister, more black. "To the extent that this caused offense to anyone, I obviously regret it," Gaines said, emphasizing that any racial overtones were surely unintended. "I'll be a little more careful about doing portraiture or photo illustration on a very tight deadline, which was the case here."

This wasn't the first time Gaines made himself accountable to the public, but it was the first time he or any other journalist of comparable stature had done so in cyberspace. Two days after the darkened cover appeared it was a top news story around the country and under attack from the NAACP. But it was the "vivid and insistent" outpouring online, Gaines said, that made him decide not to wait five more days for the next "To Our Readers" column in *Time*.

So he took his white flag and waved it across a message board of America Online (AOL), an online service that claims over a million subscribers (and supplies *Time*'s own service, *Time* Online). His explanation was important for its own sake, but also for where he

first made it. Gaines and journalists at all levels around the country are increasingly making themselves accessible electronically for give-and-take with a growing segment of their public.

Cyberspace, particularly the Internet — a worldwide network of interlinked computers reachable by some 25 million users, including subscribers to commercial systems like AOL, Prodigy, and CompuServe — has proved an invaluable resource for journalists, providing boundless access to obscure information and research, unique story ideas, and the sources to flesh them out. Message boards and e-mail have long been integral facets of this technology. Increasingly, they are fostering an unusual symbiosis: readers have unprecedented access to reporters and editors, and journalists enjoy the rare opportunity to learn with lightning speed what their audience is thinking on a variety of issues. At last count some 300 publications had some degree of availability online, or were planning to, and the popularity of these ventures is often measured by their level of interactivity.

Enthusiasts hail these developments as the Second Coming of journalism, a chink in the thick wall that has largely separated the media from their audience. But critics, even some who embrace the new information age, have some legitimate concerns, not least of which is that journalists can't possibly do their jobs and answer every piece of e-mail. Nor can they partake in every message board exchange, particularly those that serve

as dumping grounds for keystroke-happy zealots. And no one can be sure who the people behind the screen really are, or if what they're saying is true. (Yet when Gaines posted his mea culpa about *Time*'s cover, none of the newspapers that picked up his quote called *Time* to confirm that it was in fact Gaines who had posted it.)

There's another issue. The population of cyberspace is expected to double in the coming year, but at this point just one-third of American households own computers; far fewer have modems or know how to use them. While the efficiency of electronic feedback can be constructive — or destructive — for some journalists, the opinions delivered through the medium aren't yet likely to represent the country at large.

About one-fifth of *Time*'s New York news staff have AOL accounts, and many use the message boards to some degree. Associate editor Sophronia Scott-Gregory had already been online discussing the possible racial implications of the Simpson case when she read in *The New York Times* that *Time* had intentionally altered the mug shot. "Did anyone do comparison shopping at their local newsstands?" Gregory posted for all to see at 12:24 P.M. on Tuesday, June 21. "Our cover, though we used the same photo, is markedly different from *Newsweek*'s . . . our(s) is credited as a 'photo illustration' because an artist darkened it and did other things to it for a more dramatic effect. *Newsweek* ran the straight photo credited to the AP."

Jennifer Wolff (jenwolff@well.com) is a freelance writer based in New York.

# L I N N E

## At You From Cyberspace

In the next day-and-a-half accusations of racism, commercialism, and cultural insensitivity flooded *Time* Online's message boards, and not just from average users. "We took a boring photo and made it more interesting looking, more sinister . . . that was misleading, no matter how we try to explain it," wrote *Time* associate editor Mike Lemonick. Added writer Chris Farley, "Darkened skin should not be used to symbolize tragedy and violence." Gregory posted again: "It never occurred to me that we would do such a thing on purpose. I was surprised and confused to find out that we did."

Gaines admits that initially he didn't like to see staff members posting negative comments about the cover, and "thought they shouldn't do it and told them not to." Eventually, however, he "realized they shouldn't be constrained from stating their opinion, that the First Amendment rests on it."

After three days of dodging calls from media reporters, Gaines took to the message boards himself. "I didn't want to let them hang there thinking *Time* was idiotic for what we did, but that we had understandable motives, even if they were wrongheaded," he says.

Gaines had another purpose, one that transformed a forum devoted to the voice of the people into one of equal service to his magazine. If he responded to press inquiries, he says, "I was concerned I wouldn't be quoted accurately," but he assumed that if he offered an official response in writing online, he would

be. "The longer we said nothing," he adds, "the longer we looked like we were stonewalling, which surely was not the intention."

The angry tones continued after Gaines posted, but with an occasional smattering of good will. "I am comforted that the 'darkening' was not racially motivated and [Gaines's reply] illustrates what *Time* or *Newsweek* go through on a weekly basis deciding what to place on their covers," wrote one AOL user. Wrote another: "I am impressed that various *Time* employees have joined in . . . impressed more than anything at [their] flat-out honesty." One hopeful response: "This forum enables ordinary Americans to give some input to the writers and editors of the nation's most influential publications. Perhaps we too can help shape public opinion."

**F**ew if any mandates exist to regulate what any journalist discusses online. But what distinguishes reporters' posts from their letters and phone conversations is that they are inherently public. That's why some media institutions are concerned with issues such as libel, and with whether First Amendment and contractual protections extend to what any individual reporter composes in a piece of e-mail or on a message board, which can be read by thousands and thousands of users.

Gaines's post touched on another

issue. Debate has centered on who owns words posted in electronic forums, and how accountable the people are behind them. Some online services issue "You Own Your Own Words" disclaimers suggesting that authors can challenge unauthorized use of their messages in other mediums. But that isn't a legal guarantee; it's an unenforceable ethic promulgated with two principles in mind: users should take responsibility both for what they write and for online material they may be tempted to disseminate elsewhere.

Journalistic assumption, however, argues that since these forums are public, they are therefore public record. Gaines wanted his quote picked up, and it was, by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and others. Says Michael Godwin, counsel for the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), a cyberspace civil liberties watchdog group: "Gaines took a very traditional journalist's view; you show up in a public forum, you say it and it's out there. It was a clash between the journalism ethic and the not-always-articulated ethic that has developed on a number of online systems." Not every user wants his post used without permission. And even though common sense warns journalists not to take at face value anything they find online, that is, of course, exactly what some did with Gaines's post.

Not everyone at *Time* considers this electronic brush with the public worthwhile. "I don't believe in this interface bullshit," snorts the art critic Robert

....A big-time editor feels obliged to offer a mea culpa electronically before doing so in print.

Hughes. "It's a giant waste of time that takes away from what writers are supposed to do, which is read and write and experience the world. I'm an elitist; I value my time. You're not going to catch me going online apologizing because I was cruel to an artist."

As for culling valuable information online, many still prefer the street. "As an investigative reporter, it's rare that I get a letter from a reader who has direct knowledge about a subject I've investigated or am interested in investigating," says associate editor Richard Behar of *Time*. "If I went online I'd probably miss a lot of the things I'd find if I were out pounding the pavement."

There's also that question of how well online culture represents the world at large. Poor people aren't as likely to show up online. Computer users, rich or poor, are technically savvier than the average American, and as a rule better educated. It could smack of elitism if journalists took electronic correspondence more seriously than letters or phone calls.

Then again, maybe it's the other way around. At a luncheon of the American Society of Magazine Editors, *Vanity Fair*'s editor in chief, Graydon Carter, told his colleagues, "We pride ourselves that our articles tell you as much as you need to know." Carter doesn't expect his staff to venture online. For readers with further questions or opinions about a certain piece, he suggests, "That's what cocktail parties are for."

Well, many journalists counter, that's a problem, because too often cocktail parties and similarly narrow, homogeneous forums are the places where reporters and editors get story ideas. While working at *New York* magazine, Jon Carroll, now a columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, remembers editorial meetings at which Clay Felker, then

*New York*'s editor, would "reach into his pocket and bring out pieces of paper and say, 'Here's a story,' because someone at a party mentioned it." Cyberspace, say Carroll and others, is less limited than its critics contend, and far broader than the circles in which many journalists travel. There are even users who are poor, he says — they use university or corporate accounts or the mailroom computer — and he adds that the online community is growing more ethnically diverse.

Such broad access can be invaluable, some journalists think. "The absence of contact with people who are after all our customers has gotten in the way of our understanding of what it is we really need," says Bill Mitchell, director of electronic publishing for the *San Jose Mercury News*.

*Time*'s executive editor, Dick Duncan, has a similar view. Last winter he spent hours investigating a challenge made by two users who, in a message board entitled *TIME'S ANTI-GUN BIAS*, accused the magazine of not delivering the entire truth about NRA opposition to the "cop killer bullet" bill passed in 1986. Duncan's research revealed they were half right: *Time* had neglected to report the little-publicized fact that the NRA had abandoned its opposition once legislators rewrote the bill to exclude certain forms of standard ammunition.

*The New York Times* also closely monitors its message boards, available on AOL. As a result, and in small steps, the newspaper is trying not only to become more accountable, but also more sensitive to readers. Recently a religious Republican complained that media use of the phrase "religious right" unfairly associated him with people like Jerry

Falwell or Pat Buchanan. "It prompted a discussion among staff members, and we might try to think about how we approach this issue in the future," says Andrew Rosenthal, managing editor of the *Times*'s Washington bureau. "These message boards are valuable because when entering the electronic world you make a commitment not just to present your product, but to establish a two-way street of communication."

For some, this mode of communication has become an integral part of their job. In a column about Whitewater coverage, *New York* magazine's media critic, Jon Katz, reproached the Washington press corps for acting as morality police when investigating the lives and behavior of politicians, a practice he felt was damaging to the political process. Afterwards he was invited to attend a computer chat with several Washington journalists who took issue with his stance, and they raised points Katz had not previously considered. "I realized I was too rigid in saying that journalists should get out of this area," admits Katz, who since last May has put his e-mail address at the end of each column, and has received some 5,500 correspondences. "I concluded that I should have defined more broadly and less absolutely the circumstances surrounding the issue."

When the electronic aftermath of a column on blacks and Jews led Katz to plug into a national bulletin board service of some 600 black professionals, he was quickly aware that "I had actually never spoken to that many African-Americans in my life and it really opened my eyes to their issues." In his piece Katz raised several questions about race that he thought the media should address. But he said his online experience made him realize that he was directing his message exclusively to whites, thus exclud-



....For story ideas, is hanging out  
hanging out at cocktail parties?

# N E Cyberspace more valuable than

ing African-American concerns. "This dramatically improved my ability to write about media coverage on this subject," Katz says.

Could seriously heeding online feedback undercut a journalist's confidence, and perhaps even stifle one's voice, tone, and sense of irony? Online journalists insist they are trained to filter information, and thus don't take every gripe to heart, just those that indicate they could have done a better job. This connection to public opinion "stops us from becoming Moses on the mountaintop hurling tablets down at the masses," says Katz, adding that many pieces of angry but well-informed e-mail have led him to re-evaluate his work.

That is not every journalist's experience, however. Many who try it find certain aspects of electronic communication more frustrating than enlightening. "I thought we'd get an interesting cross-section of discussion on various topics and it got overwhelmed with anti-gun-control people," bemoans Bruce Dold, an editorial board member of the *Chicago Tribune*, available on AOL as Chicago Online. "They were fixed in their ways and didn't want to debate the subject. I stopped responding."

*U.S. News & World Report* columnist John Leo, whose "Dear John Leo" message board appears in the magazine's forum on CompuServe, wishes he had something to respond to. "I don't deduce anything from the flow of conversation, which is chaotic and disorganized and sometimes irritating. So little of what's written there is addressed to me," Leo complains. Topic drift, as such things are known, is a common occurrence online, and may even yield more interesting material than the topic itself. But wading through this irrelevance can be maddening for journalists on deadline. Recently

the discussion in Leo's area turned to alcoholism. Leo's contribution to the exchange seemed ancillary, as users appeared more interested in exploring their own battles with the disease or those of people they knew. Often, he said, "It's like if I said the world was flat no one would contest me but instead start talking about maps and earth and dirt and nothing that had to do with what I've written."

And online critiques of specific stories aren't always appreciated. "A danger of going online is that you're bombarded with opinions and you think it's the whole world and it's very easy to be influenced," says Debra Rosenberg, a reporter in *Newsweek's* Boston bureau. Rosenberg took some nasty swipes in the media conference of The Well, a Sausalito, California-based bulletin board service, for a May 16 cover story, "Men, Women & Computers," that she had helped research. The exchange lasted nearly a month, her critics alleging that the coverage was "poorly researched," "uninformed," and "sexist" in its stereotyping of women as computer-phobes. "These weren't specific complaints, like 'you said X and that's not really right,'" Rosenberg says. "Nothing they said was really helpful."

Another concern about interactivity is that online journalists may begin to regard other users of the Internet as more important than ordinary readers. "We need to avoid the sanctification of online communication as somehow being more holy than any other kind of communication," says Denise Caruso, an authority on media technology.

Then there is the problem of sheer volume. When reporter Adam Bauman

of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote about hackers illegally storing pornographic images in the computers at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, a nuclear weapons research facility — a clear security breach, he said — he received over 5,000 pieces of angry e-mail, and had to change his e-mail address. But his editors wanted to understand the controversy surrounding his piece better, so he posted it in The Well and in alt.media-coverage in Usenet, home to some 6,000 newsgroups that serve as forums on as many issues. Between the lines of the many vituperative responses, Bauman thought he found a lesson for the future. He concluded that editors had cut too much essential information when the story was bumped from the business section to the front page, and readers were left confused. As for comments that he did a lousy reporting job and had sensationalized the situation at Livermore, he observed: "People are beginning to respond to what traditionally was a one-way medium. How that ultimately shapes coverage is yet to be defined, but at this point you can't let it dictate what you do."

It is obviously too early to tell how journalists will fare in cyberspace. The technology is still too new to them, and most reporters haven't mastered it. Few, so far, feel any obligation to use it at all. Concerns about time constraints, user accountability, and getting too close to members of the cyber community are valid ones. But there can clearly be benefits, too, and they go well beyond supplementing traditional reporting tools with electronic ones. They include a heightening of journalistic accountability and the opportunity to know better the needs of the people journalism serves, notions too often overlooked in the world of paper and ink. ♦

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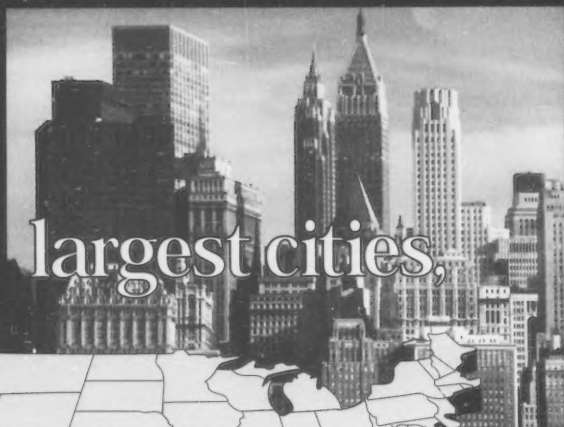
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# The Golden Age, Maybe?

Many reporters, producers, and editors believe that it's all over. Their kind of Journalism — with a capital J — is kaput. Quick cuts, three-second sound bites, three-graf snippets of news, and the new technology have taken over. In-depth, multidimensional reportage of any kind is becoming but a quaint and nostalgic memory.

This new column will be examining some of the presumptions, such as the one above, that accompany the "communications" revolution as they apply to capital-J Journalism. Despite the lamentations we're hearing, it may well be that the golden age of real Journalism is poised to begin.

Consider this: a basic problem of journalism has always been *length*. For anybody who cares about a subject, and knows a lot about it, the typical journalistic account of anything is too short. For everybody else, it's too long. No happy medium seems possible.

So far, anyway.

It just so happens that in electronic communications, this basic problem of journalism evaporates into the ether, as it were. Flattened trees are no longer necessary; nor are thirty-minute newscasts full of 1:10 "stories" packaged among eight minutes' worth of Ex-Lax and Geritol commercials.

Unlike generations of reporters, editors, and producers before them, the new breed won't have to grieve that their best stuff is on the spike or the cutting room floor.

That doesn't mean they vacuum up every fact, unevaluated, and regurgitate it into the public maw. What it means is that important, complicated, thoughtful Journalism — some of which takes time and/or space to convey — will become routinely possible. Even perhaps compulsory.

In the "old" journalism, suppose you're sent to cover the whateveritis in Bosnia. As always, you can't tell the real story, only what happened yesterday, in a few clipped sentences or pictures. The result is that the audience, whether readers, listeners, or viewers, is often or even usually — if you listen to some critics — misled. Our time- or space-limited journalistic protocols ordinarily preclude penetrating the veneer.

Suppose, instead, that when you get assigned to Bosnia, you bone up beforehand on *everything*. You get there and find the historic and ethnic and religious war, and you find people who personify the issues precisely, but it takes a few thousand words to explain what your eyes and experience and intelligence have trained you in particular to *see*. In the journalism of the coming media, you report it all, and more, and more. You take the pictures, the video; you capture the sounds; you connect what you're *seeing* within the context of the reading and research you have done, with journalistic inquiries that have gone before, and with history and

sociology and religion and . . . and . . .

So, you do your story. Your summary piece might not be that different from, say, that story of the "old" journalism. But that's just the beginning. As your summary appears on the reader's or viewer's screen, you've highlighted some key words and some key pictures. The reader just moves an indicator to a highlighted word or picture and, whammo, the machinery does magic; up pop all sorts of options for more and more and more, interconnections to the whole subject, in parts or wholes, documentaries, books, you name it. Whatever you'd like to know appears on the screen virtually instantly. In full color. In full motion video. With sound yet.

The reader/viewer/listener can go as deeply or as narrowly as she chooses; she can stop with just the summary, as if she were reading *USA Today* or watching the *CBS Evening News*. Or she can read or view one sidebar, or read a history of Bosnia, or watch a documentary or two or three. She can spend two seconds or two minutes on your dispatch, or two days, depending on how deeply she cares to dig.

In fact, our ever-more-complicated world sometimes can't and shouldn't be shoe-horned into 800 words, or 8,000. Here we have all these journalists who are ever more highly educated, ever more sensitive, ever more thoughtful, ever more cosmopolitan — and we tell them to boil whateveritis down to 800 words.

Three newspapers are already experimenting with this new in-depth Journalism. They are the *San Francisco Examiner*, *The Virginian-Pilot* and *The Ledger-Star* in Norfolk, and, above all, *The News & Observer* in Raleigh, North Carolina. Ticking away in *The News & Observer's* rather incredible electronic service (which I dialed up from home) sits an account of a conference held at the Nieman Foundation last May. The topic: the role and challenges of public-interest journalism in an expanding information marketplace. Shallow this account certainly isn't. Says the introduction:

Assembled here in hypertext format are full transcripts from the conference discussion sessions (nearly 100,000 words), plus the seven commentaries, linked to pertinent documents, photographs, a few audio and video clips, numerous Internet archives, and other sites . . .

The new forms of media will finally allow journalists to deploy some of the sophisticated knowledge and skills they've worked so hard to gain. Yes, the ultimate Journalism may be just about to happen. What will it require of its practitioners? Watch this space.

**Stephen D. Isaacs**

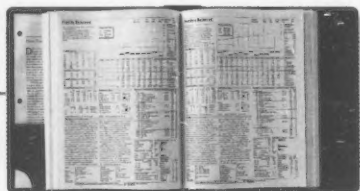
*Stephen D. Isaacs is a professor and associate dean of Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism and co-chair of the university's Center for New Media.*

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# Yet Another Conspiracy Theory

by Anthony Marro

I.F. Stone warned that all governments are run by liars, and that nothing they say should be believed.

Now comes Paul Weaver to warn that the same is true of all newspapers and, with the possible exception of C-SPAN and a few openly partisan journals of opinion, pretty much all of the rest of the media as well.

Some of his criticisms will sound familiar, since they include the standard litany of neoconservative complaints. But the main proposition put forth by this former Harvard professor, Washington bureau chief of *Fortune* magazine, and public relations official for the Ford Motor Company goes considerably further, arguing that the media and the government have joined together to institutionalize a culture of lying in our system of government.

Weaver's claim is that journalists and public officials combine to fabricate artificial crises of public policy that end up being "covered in the media, reacted to by the public, and dealt with by government" as if they were real. In short: officials tell lies by inflating the urgency of things, and journalists compound the fraud by passing them along in supposedly objective — but inherently uncritical — ways.

The result, he argues, is both bad government and a journalism that is "stupid and dysfunctional," practiced by reporters who are little more than "dependent, submissive, narcissistic courtiers" to the officials they cover.

Weaver says he's not intent on bashing the press. He claims to have a high regard for reporters, and one senses that at bottom he does. He finds greater fault with their editors and with the whole structure of supposedly objective journalism that they work in. But his book is a compendium of journalistic shortcomings and failures, and one gets clear warning of where he's coming from just by checking his footnotes. With Vietnam, his principal source is Peter Braestrup's *Big Story*, a carefully reported but highly critical assessment of the media coverage of Tet. On Watergate, he touts Edward Jay Epstein's minimizing of the work done by *The Washington Post*. And for an assessment of Abe

Rosenthal's tenure as editor of *The New York Times*, he steers readers toward Joe Goulden's *Fit To Print*, which is easily the most critical and nasty account of Rosenthal's stewardship outside the media columns of *Spy* magazine.

Some of what he covers is much-plowed ground. The whole government-media symbiosis has been the subject of much discussion and hand-wringing over the years, and not just by people who believe the press behaves badly. Tom Wicker complained in his

1978 book *On Press* about the limitations of "objective" reporting and the problems of relying on official sources. Edwin Bayley's *Joe McCarthy and the Press* examined the difficulties reporters have in dealing with liars.



## NEWS AND THE CULTURE OF LYING

BY PAUL H. WEAVER

THE FREE PRESS. 243 PP. \$22.95

Leon Sigal's 1973 study of twenty year's worth of *New York Times* and *Washington Post* coverage showed that 78 percent of the nearly 3,000 national and foreign stories sampled were based on official sources, suggesting the degree to which, even back then, government officials

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**For information and entry blanks:** Jan Boudart, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, 1845 Sheridan Road, Evanston, Illinois 60208, (708) 491-5661 Fax# (708) 491-3956.

were shaping the news.

But Weaver takes this another step, picturing journalists not just as victims of hype and deception but as partners in it, allowing officials to create artificial crises in order to inflate the urgency of their programs and drum up public support for them. His term for this is "media-enabled fabrication," and he says it amounts to a lie.

Weaver once taught political science, and his book reads much like a series of lectures. The first of these focuses on Joseph Pulitzer, who helped create the modern newspaper, and whom Weaver blames for many bad things. Before Pulitzer, most newspapers aimed themselves at fairly small and select audiences. They were partisan papers intended to serve specific constituencies. But what Pulitzer did was to create the first truly mass-circulation newspaper, pulling readers from all segments of society into his *New York World* by producing a news report that was less partisan than was usual for the day and by giving stories such display and impact that all segments of the community felt they were affected by them.

This attracted advertisers as well, and for the first time newspapers began getting more money from advertisers than they did from subscribers. As the need to get more customers for these advertisers increased, papers began turning toward marginal readers, including some who had little real interest in news and less interest in paying for it. And these, complains Weaver, were people who could be attracted only by a loud and sensational press, one that made every situation seem a crisis in order to make it seem important to all of its readers.

Weaver's point is that this new journalism gave press-savvy politicians like Woodrow Wilson the vehicle they needed to go over the heads of their constitutional colleagues in the Congress and appeal directly to the American people, creating what Weaver and others call a "rhetorical" presidency. They could do it because the supposedly "objective" journalism of the new mass-market newspaper gave them a free pass to say what they pleased without partisan rebuttal.

"Everything the Constitution had

done to make democracy safe for individual rights and prudent statecraft, Pulitzer's journalism was undoing," Weaver says. "It took events out of their constitutional contexts. It focused on the near term. It stressed the emotional and the immediate rather than the rational and the considered."

The result, he says, is that today much government policy is crafted in an atmosphere of self-created crisis, by officials who know that the standards of objective journalism will let them get away with it, and by journalists who understand what's going on ("It's practically impossible to fool a reporter," Weaver says) but permit it. The journalists do this, he says, because playing the game by these rules gives them a sense of "mutual empowerment" with the officials, and because reporters are able to embrace lies when they are validated by the people whose approval they seek. Which is another way of saying that they like to suck up to sources.

Not everyone will buy into this thesis.

Martin Mayer might argue, as he did in *Making News*, that the partisan press Weaver applauds tended to fragment society, exacerbate tensions, and contribute to "provincialism and intolerance and bumptiousness." Most journalists would argue that the relationship between media and government is far more adversarial than cozy, and that Weaver's notions of "mutual empowerment" and embraceable lies are a lot of hooey. Many of the staged and scripted events Weaver complains of are so obvious that even minimally informed citizens can see them for what they are: attempts by officials and agencies to elbow their way to the table of public discussion.

Moreover, the mere fact that an official scripts a media event doesn't mean that the media buy into it or buy into it on that official's terms. A lot of these shows close in New Haven, to dreadful reviews. And some forms of the "rhetorical" presidency he bemoans likely would have come into being the first time a president with a baritone voice was matched up with a microphone and a national radio audience, no matter what sort of journalism was being practiced at the time.



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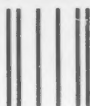
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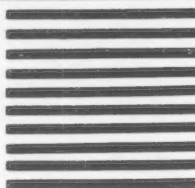
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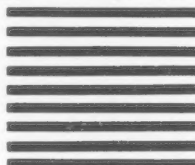
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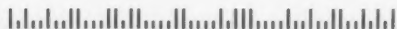
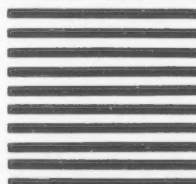
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Weaver says at the start that most of what he's discussing doesn't meet the dictionary definition of "lying," since it doesn't involve either blatant untruths or altering of facts. The question is whether it's really lying at all, or just the sort of posturing and exaggerating and spin-doctoring that should be expected in any public policy debate.

One chapter is titled "How A News Story Lies," and is devoted almost entirely to a December 4, 1964, account by Wallace Turner in *The New York Times* about the arrests of students during a free-speech demonstration at the University of California at Berkeley. A lot of journalists would find nothing wrong with the story, and neither did I. And Weaver says that the facts presented in the story are not only true, but obviously true.

His complaint is that Turner's story implies that the events are authentic, while in fact the students wouldn't have staged the sit-ins if not for the media coverage. He faults the *Times*, saying that it implied that it was being neutral in just giving an objective report, when in fact it was aware that the students were "engaging in a made-for-media propaganda action," and it was helping them do it. This was never a "real" event, he says, and to report it as though it was a real event was a lie.

But is this really a "culture of lying," or just a legitimate form of political action — a way for groups that feel disenfranchised to call attention to their complaints. The techniques used by the students were not much different from those used by hunger-striking suffragettes in Britain, by Gandhi in India, and by civil rights activists throughout the United States. Most readers understand them for what they are: public posturing intended to build support for a cause.

Weaver relies heavily on his own experiences in journalism in crafting his thesis. He invites us to see him as a model, saying, "I believe that my experience as a journalist is every journalist's experience."

And then he tells us this:

"What I liked best about being a journalist was meeting, talking with, thinking myself into the shoes of, and generally identifying with people at the top of government agencies, companies,

and other important institutions. I loved being able to see virtually anyone I wanted to short of the president himself. It was delicious to be received cordially when I arrived at their offices for the interview. When asking questions, I tried to be inviting and encouraging, and not only because I wanted to inveigle the newsmaker into a self-revelatory response but also because I genuinely liked these people, I wanted to make them feel happy in my presence, I wanted to be as close to them as I could . . ."

When this didn't happen, when the people he was reporting on were hostile or indifferent and told him to go away, that's just what he did. When Frank Zarb, the just-named head of the Federal Energy Administration, brushed aside his questions, for example, Weaver didn't know what to do. "Within minutes I was blushing in confusion and humiliation," he writes. "Soon, not sure of what to do but painfully aware I wasn't wanted, I closed my notebook, mumbled something about having no further questions, picked up my briefcase and raincoat, wished him well in his new job, and stumbled out of the room."

Weaver spent thirty years in the business, and has some keen insights into the craft. He wants more context and completeness in stories, and most won't find fault with that. He wants a more diverse and more judgmental press, and that's a legitimate point of view. His chapter on the role of editors (he says their job is to "have lunch and define reality") should be required reading in every journalism school. But he overstates his case, wildly I think, and ends up painting a portrait of Cromwell as merely a wart.

It's a given that most news stories are incomplete, that many lack proper context, and that much misinformation gets passed along to the public. But the theory of a free press isn't that any one story will ever get to the real truth of an issue, no matter at what length it's written or how well it is done. Rather, it's that if enough people examine something from enough different perspectives over a long enough period of time, something approaching truth will emerge.

There's a strong case to be made that

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this still happens most of the time, on most major issues. Eventually, the most important lies are exposed, and eventually most of the staged crises that so trouble Weaver are put into some sort of rational context. People get enough information over time that they can make up their minds whether they'd prefer to see dams built or snail darters live.

This is the important reality that is missing from the sweeping condemnations Weaver makes in his book. It's an incremental process, but it's an important and an ongoing one. It happens to some degree every day at every newspaper, and it happens simply because there are enough reporters out there who stay with a story until they've sorted it out, who don't have much interest in "mutual empowerment," who don't buy the bridge when officials try to sell it, and who don't just pick up their briefcases and raincoats and stumble off when officials try to brush them away.

*Anthony Marro has been a reporter for The Rutland (Vermont) Herald, Newsday, Newsweek and The New York Times. He is now the editor of Newsday.*

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## The Boss of Bosses

by Edwin Diamond

One of the more revealing passages in this maddening, provocative, and ultimately frustrating study of the vast Newhouse media empire deals with a series of lunches in the Grill Room of the Four Seasons, the premiere canteen of tout media New York. Samuel I. "Si" Newhouse, oldest son of the founding father Sam, is meeting with one of his employee-executives, book publisher Robert Bernstein, who has pushed the profit levels of Newhouse's Random House to a creamy 15 percent of (steadily rising) revenues. Despite this admirable performance, the revered Bernstein is later fired by Si Newhouse for not being more aggressive in pursuing even bigger returns from mass-market titles.



But that's not what's really creepy about these Grill Room lunches. On hand with Si and Bob is Steven Newhouse, son of Si's brother Donald. Thirtysomething Steve is considered the most promising of the third generation Newhouses, a Yale man likely to run the empire when Si,

**NEWHOUSE:  
ALL THE GLITTER, POWER, AND  
GLORY OF AMERICA'S RICHEST  
MEDIA EMPIRE AND THE SECRETIVE  
MAN BEHIND IT**

BY THOMAS MAIER  
HARPERCOLLINS. 447 PP. \$24.95.

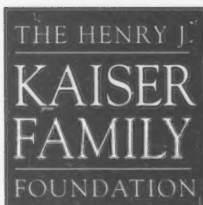
who was born in 1927, steps down. (The other candidate is said to be Jonathan Newhouse, a son of Si's brother Norman.) Throughout the series of lunches with Si and Bernstein, Steve utters not a word. "It was apparent that you were not to seek his opinion even though he was there," recalls the astonished Bernstein. In Corleone fashion, Steve's silence was "enforced" by Si in gestures and body language "invoking the weight of a family code."

Images of the Black Hand and vows of omerta come regularly to mind while reading about the Newhouses. As secretive as it is vast, the family empire controls more than two dozen daily newspapers from Staten Island to Oregon, plus the Sunday supplement *Parade*; the Condé Nast collection of magazines, including *Vogue*, *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *Allure*, *GQ*, and *Self*; the publishing firms of Random House, Knopf, Crown, and Ballantine, among other imprints; and cable franchises with over one million subscribers. Last year, *Fortune* put the Newhouse family wealth at \$13 billion, and author Maier describes Si Newhouse as the most powerful if not quite the wealthiest businessman in America. But no one can be sure how much Newhouse is worth or what he wants to use his supposed power for. Like the Corleones, this is a private family affair. A.J. Liebling thought he understood the patriarch Sam, the hustling son of a dirt-poor immigrant father who spoke no English. "No political ideas, just economic convictions," Liebling said of Sam.

Maier seems to accept the same verdict for the son. But he can't be sure. Si Newhouse wouldn't consent to be interviewed and other Newhouses effectively brushed Maier off. Condé Nast soldatos, publishing-house capodecinas, and other made family members begged off when they learned that the project wasn't "authorized." Not many people know the Newhouses or their family business, and that's the way Si wants it, as Sam before him wanted it, and

presumptively, nephew Steve (or Jonathan) will want it into the twenty-first century. To borrow Liebling's best truism: freedom of the press really does belong to the man who owns one.

Maier has two stories to tell, and he succeeds at the first, providing a solid factual history. The semi-public countenance of the Newhouse holdings is carefully presented. Sam Newhouse's out-of-the-shtetl story is familiar enough; it was recounted by Richard



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Meeker in his 1983 book *News-paperman: S.I. Newhouse and the Business of News*. Taking up where Meeker left off, Maier follows the rising fortunes of Si after his father's death in 1979. The college drop-out and aimless rich kid around Manhattan comes into his own. He expands the magazine holdings, adding *Self* and *Details*, spending perhaps \$75-100 million to try to push *Vanity Fair* into the black (it's still not clear if *VF* is yet profitable), purchasing and making over *The New*

*Yorker* (another loss leader: those who know about these things say the magazine lost over \$10 million last year).

Si also presides over the success of the Newhouse papers in the Reagan '80s; the chain triumphs with its M&Ms-flavored journalism: Monopoly and Mediocrity. (Newhouse publishes the largest dailies in Ohio, Louisiana, New Jersey, and Oregon, all effectively monopolies in their markets and "none known for their journalistic

excellence.") Another specialty is the closing down of papers — including, unsentimentally, the one in Bayonne, New Jersey, where Sam scuffled for his first job.

Maier is good at what he correctly perceives as the Newhouses' two-tier publishing philosophy: slick, oh-so-hip magazines for the rich and famous — or more accurately, for middle-class wannabes — and dull, money-making newspapers presenting resolutely local news for the undemanding plebes. Whether upmarket Condé Nast hot-book or downscale monopoly daily, however, both Newhouse tiers are excruciatingly attuned to advertisers' needs. In October 1992, a date that will live in media infamy, *Vogue's* sales department created the outsert — a magazine looking like the real *Vogue*, with the same writers, editors, and photographers, and mailed out as a twin of *Vogue*, but actually a sixty-eight-page, paid-for paean to one cosmetics company. *Revlon*, read the logo on the cover above the photos of *Vogue* models Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer. At the Newhouse dailies, meanwhile, one obliging editor in Birmingham ran a "news" column designed to promote local auto dealers and restaurant advertisers. Another company man in Portland destroyed the press run of the Sunday real estate section because it contained a story suggesting it was possible to sell a home without a broker. No wonder Si Newhouse is so reclusive, shy, secretive, etc., etc., etc. when it comes to talking about his business.

But there's something else readers, particularly those weaned on *Vanity-Fair*-ized journalism, have come to expect as well: the personal in addition to the institutional. Maier doesn't explain what motivates Si to acquire, kill off, hire, and fire with the seeming casualness of a Godfather. Examples abound. Si directed Random House to buy Crown Publishing without really looking at the ledgers (awash in red ink, Crown's P&L sheets helped speed Bob Bernstein's exit). When *HG* was abruptly shut down, the magazine's staff wasn't granted the courtesy of being allowed to pose for a farewell office picture. The esteemed Grace Mirabella learned she was out as editor of *Vogue* — after thirty-six years —

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from Liz Smith on television. Bob Gottlieb was axed as editor of *The New Yorker* while in Tokyo (Yes, *The New Yorker*, Yes, Japan).

Maier was obviously hampered by his lack of access. Newhouse's media reach is awesome (I realized, when I started reading this book, that I'm a "Newhouse author" — my last book was published by a division of Random House). But it also seems likely that Maier, a business reporter for *New York Newsday* since 1987, is not all that adept with the sharper tools of celebrity journalism. In the hands of the best practitioners, for example, someone like Gail Sheehy, *Vanity Fair*'s premiere reporter-analyzer of character, even reluctant analysts can be made to come alive. It is to Maier's credit, perhaps, that he knows his limits and stays off the slippery slope of pop psychology. He does note in passing Si Newhouse's short stature (sitting down, his feet don't touch the floor) and eccentric manners; Si shows up to one social affair in sweatsuit and sneakers, hip for a downtown *Details* staffer but netkulturny in a media magnate.

Frustratingly, Maier has little to offer about Newhouse's politics, his religion, his cultural tastes, or his causes beyond the company bottom line. Many men in his tax bracket are Republicans, and much is made of Si Newhouse's friendship with the infamous Roy Cohn; but Cohn put power before party. Should we assume Newhouse does, too? The Newhouse family is generically Jewish; at least, one of Si's sons was married by a rabbi, but that is about all we learn on the subject. Si Newhouse in 1988 paid \$17 million for Jasper Johns's painting "False Starts" ("the highest price ever paid at that time for the work of a living artist"). So, his tastes run to modern American art? Or was this just one more glamorous acquisition, like *The New Yorker*? Bob Bernstein tried to put the bite on the Newhouses for support of human rights organizations he is connected with — to no avail; was this unexceptional cause really "too political" for Newhouse? There's also Si Newhouse's acute case of anglophilia — a disease well worth isolating and examining — as manifested by his hiring of Anna

Wintour, Harold Evans, Tina Brown, James Truman, and faux Brit Graydon Carter (a Canadian). Biographer Maier doesn't do enough with these materials. Maybe Si Newhouse is, as Brown says, "all about work."

As a consequence, Si Newhouse is occasionally overshadowed by his supporting cast. *New Yorker* editor Brown steals the scenes she's in. She talked on the record to Maier, showing her understanding of the basics of journalism (Graydon Carter, by contrast, refused to be interviewed). A walk-on,

*Vanity Fair* celebrity writer Kevin Sessums, delivers the book's most delicious line to a *Newsweek* reporter. Sessums explains Brown's idea of a good VF story: "If it makes Tina's nipples firm, then she goes with it." When I caught up with Sessums for the purposes of this review, he said he was talking about his nipples, too.

Maier tries to draw a resonant lesson from *Newhouse* by implicitly contrasting Si Newhouse with other media powers. The Sulzbergers, Luces, Chandlers, and Grahams, among

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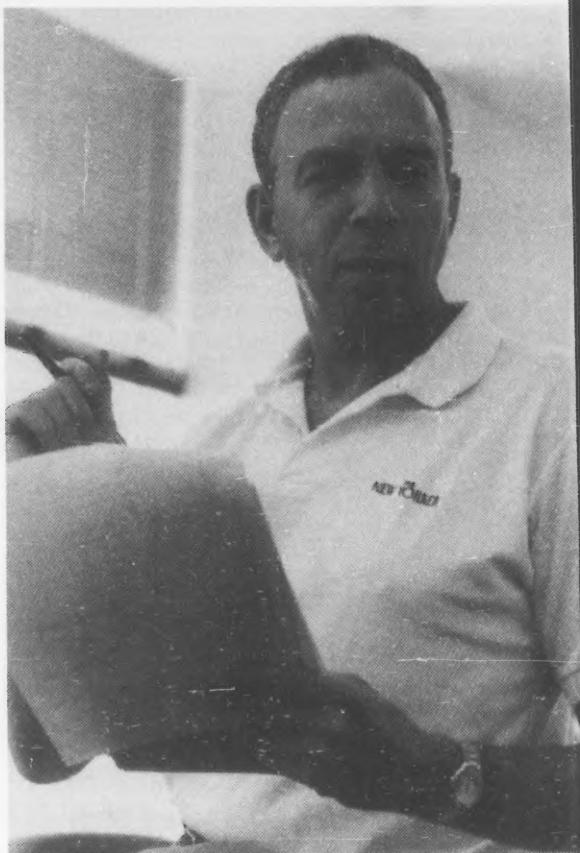
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**What motivates Si Newhouse to acquire, kill off, hire, and fire with the seeming casualness of a Godfather?**



others, all enjoyed the privileges of conglomeration and, in some cases, monopolies. By and large, however, they tended to treat their media properties as public trusts; most of the time, they honored "the boundaries between news and commercial boosterism," as Maier puts it. The putative bad lords of journalism — the senior Hearst, Colonel McCormick, Roy Howard — for all their excesses nevertheless contributed to the loud, self-interested, divisive, but finally bracing *noise* of a democratic society. Newhouse journalism, by contrast, seems less about public agendas than about fat ad pages. Until the last three pages of *Newhouse*, I fretted that Maier — and I — were judging Si Newhouse a bit harshly. He was, after all, providing jobs for thousands of people around the world, some of them friends or former colleagues of mine. Under Newhouse, Brown's *New Yorker* has been lively and informative — a must-read once again. And one of the

Newhouse papers actually won a Pulitzer a couple of years ago. Perhaps Si Newhouse, flush with the symbols of success, is formulating a vision for his empire beyond the bottom line. But then, Maier described the Newhousian "glimpse into the future." In late 1993, Si Newhouse invested \$500 million with his friend Barry Diller in the bid of QVC Network to buy Paramount Communications Inc. (a motion picture studio, a film library, Madison Square Garden and the Knicks and Rangers). Diller lost. But Si had seen the twenty-first century — and it was an alliance with a schlocky home-shopping network to burrow deeper into the entertainment business.

Doesn't that make one's nipples firm?

*Edwin Diamond is the author, most recently, of Behind the Times: Inside The "New" New York Times. His new book, White House to Your House, will be published next spring.*



## SHORT TAKES

### BALANCING ACT

Art Carey, an editor on *The Philadelphia Inquirer's* Sunday magazine, had had some experiences leading him to his view that sensitivity of the sort encouraged in diversity training endangered the unhindered exchange of ideas and opinions. Sometime before I met him, he had been asked by the *Inquirer's* book review editor, Mike Leary, to write a review of *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, by Dinesh D'Souza. The D'Souza book was a powerful assault on the coercive force of the reigning liberal orthodoxy in higher education and was viewed as a contemptible, reactionary tirade by many on the academic left. Carey agreed with the book's premises and wrote a favorable review. An editor sent it up through the bureaucracy, which, it seems, was worried that the favorable review of a book seen by many as an assault on multiculturalism could evoke turmoil. The newspaper's decision: to postpone Carey's review until the book could be sent to a reviewer who would write an unfavorable review. The result was that on page one of the *Inquirer's* book review section, two reviews of the D'Souza book appeared, one of them favorable, the other not.

If that were a common practice, or even an occasional practice at the *Inquirer*, such a policy would seem a marvelous way of allowing the reader exposure to a genuine diversity of opinion. The fact is that nobody seemed to remember another time when reviews had been paired in such a way. I asked Maxwell King, the *Inquirer's* editor, whether the same thing would have been done if the initial review of the D'Souza book had been unfavorable. King had to admit that there would very likely have been no pairing in that situation. Diversity of view is imposed when a conservative view is expressed and needs to be balanced with a liberal view, which is odd given how rarely conservative views are expressed in the liberal *Inquirer* in the first place.

FROM **Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America's Future**, BY RICHARD BERNSTEIN. KNOPF. 367 PP. \$25.

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Nobody lied to Ann [Devroy of *The Washington Post*]. If you lied to Ann she'd haunt you for the rest of your life. She would specifically keep calling you so she could put you in her story and trash you. You just don't lie to Devroy.

The White House hated her guts. Called her the Bitch Queen. They never said Ann Devroy's name over there, they always said "the bitch" and everybody knew who it was.

She is a good reporter and my good friend. We used to laugh on the campaign that my biggest sin was not being Carville's girlfriend, it was being Devroy's girlfriend.

Right now I am breaking another cardinal rule: *Never thank a reporter for doing a good job*. It's the worst thing you can do to a reporter. Michael Wines of *The New York Times* wrote a piece during the general election campaign that just stuck out as totally and completely fair. Because it was almost a once-in-a-campaign occurrence, I remember reading his piece, putting down the paper, and saying out loud, "Oh my God, I can't believe somebody actually wrote what was happening." Some of us who were on the trail at the time went to Michael that day and said, "Thank you for a fair piece." He looked at us like we had the plague.

There are very few secrets on a campaign. The next thing we heard, a bunch of other reporters were grouching about Wines and accusing him of being a shill for Bush, of being "in the tank." By paying him a compliment we had compromised him. Reporters will always warn you, "Just don't say anything good about me, it'll ruin my career."

James

The other side of that is when a reporter pulls you aside and says, "I want you to know, I'm voting for you guys."

I don't want to hear about it. "No, man, don't tell me that." That guy, he's going to go out of his way to screw you. It's almost like some affirmative action program. Because they like you they figure they've got to be really tough on you to be "fair" to the other side.

FROM **ALL'S FAIR: LOVE, WAR, AND RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT**, BY MARY MATALIN AND JAMES CARVILLE, WITH PETER KNOBLER. RANDOM HOUSE, SIMON & SCHUSTER. 493 PP. \$24.

### PHANTOM OF THE KEYBOARD

I fantasize about writing an essay on the changing technology of erasing. As writing instruments change from chisel, stylus, pen and pencil to typewriter, punch card, word processor, and "mystic" pad, the means of erasing are transformed. In this case, "progress" is easy to chart. As technology improves, the trace of erasure becomes even more invisible. What is left when electronic writing is erased? It is precisely the perfection of electronic erasure that makes this form of script so unsettling.

FROM **IMAGOLOGIES**, BY MARK C. TAYLOR AND ESA SAARIN. ROUTLEDGE. 320 PP. \$55 HARDCOVER, \$21 PAPER.



ABOUT  
BOOKS



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# The Lower case

## Association for the Blind to run buses

Mobile Register 5/17/94

## Suggest sex acts in office

The Oak Ridger (Oak Ridge, Tenn.) 8/22/94

## Underage gambling fine

Rocky Mountain News (Denver, Col.) 8/19/94

## Clinton leads blitz on Hill



The Press Democrat (Santa Rosa, Calif.) 4/26/94

## Many who moved to Florida leave after death

The Orlando Sentinel 9/19/94

## Police awake, arrest suspect

Tahlequah (Okla.) Daily Press 4/17/94

Twenty-one percent of girls said they left because they had become a mother, as did 8 percent of boys.

The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch 9/14/94

## Iowa man's soon-to-be amputated hand could hold key to murder

Idaho State Journal (Pocatello, Idaho) 3/11/94

## Muggers beat man with empty wallet

The Huntsville (Ala.) Times 5/8/94

## Complaints against judges up; fewer than half deemed legit

The Flint (Mich.) Journal 8/14/94

### CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

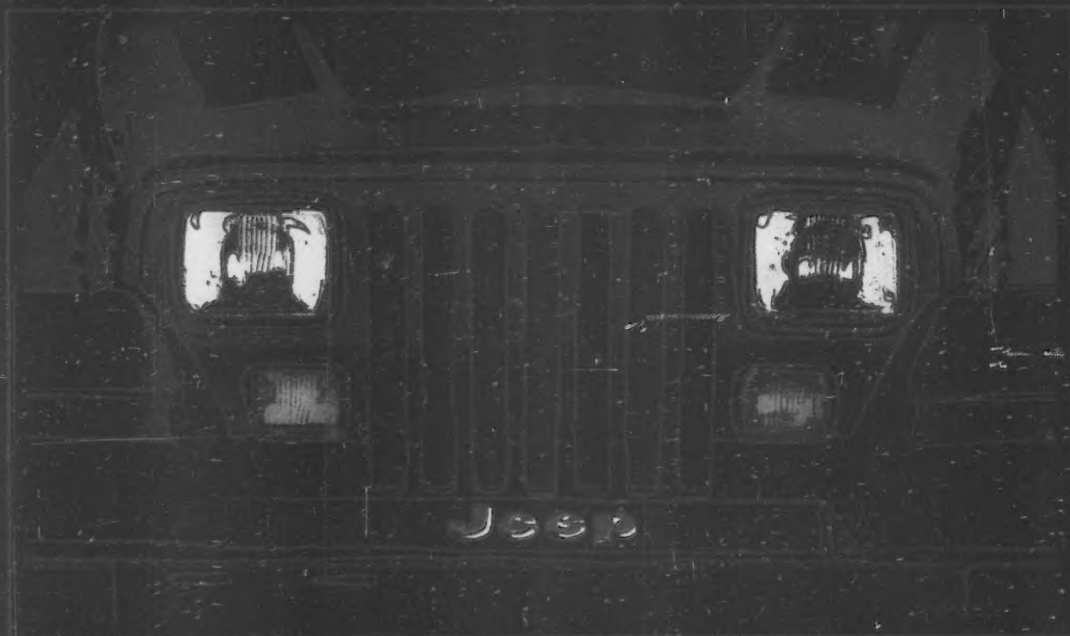
• An item in the Datebook Thursday erred in reporting that a cash bar will be part of First Federated Church's Back to School Bash today. A "car bash" will be part of the event.

The Des Moines Register 9/17/94

## Recognizing symptoms of heart attacks is fatal

The Foothill Leader (Glendale, Calif.) 9/28/94

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